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The University of Chicago
FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

CHAUCER'S OFFICIAL LIFE

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF AR
LITERATURE IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH)

BY
JAMES ROOT HULBERT

MENASHA, WIS.
THE COLLEGIATE PRESS
GEORGE BANTA PUBLISHING CO.
1912

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NOTE

In making reference to books and manuscripts, I have attempted to use abbreviations which seem reasonably clear. Perhaps the least intelligible are C. R. which stands for Close Rolls, and L. R. which stands for Life Records of Chaucer (Chaucer Soc.) Wherever possible, I have referred to prints rather than to original manuscripts because the printed calendars are much more accessible. In a work which has involved the copying of innumerable references, many of which are to documents in the Public Record Office not available to me as I revise my copy, it is too much to expect that there should be no inaccuracies. Therefore, if the reader discovers erroneous references, I must ask his leniency.

For their courtesy and assistance in making books and documents accessible to me, I wish most heartily to thank J. A. Herbert, Esq., of the Manuscript Department, the British Museum, and Edward Salisbury, Esq., and Hubert Hall, Esq., of the Public Record Office. To my friend and colleague, Dr. Thomas A. Knott, of the University of Chicago, I am deeply indebted for his kindness in reading over parts of my manuscript and trying to make their style clearer and more readable. My greatest obligation, however, is to Professor John M. Manly, not only for encouragement and specific suggestions as to the handling of this subject, but for a training which has made possible whatever in my results may be considered of value.

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INTRODUCTION

The researches of Sir Harris Nicolas, Dr. Furnivall, Mr. Selby and others have provided us with a considerable mass of detailed information regarding the life and career of Geoffrey Chaucer. Since the publication of Nicolas's biography of the poet prefixed to the Aldine edition of Chaucer's works in 1845, the old traditional biography of conjecture and inference, based often on mere probability or the contents of works erroneously ascribed to Chaucer, has disappeared and in its place has been developed an accurate biography based on facts. In the sixty-five years since Nicolas's time, however, a second tradition—connected in some way with fact, to be sure—has slowly grown up. Writers on Chaucer's life have not been content merely to state the facts revealed in the records, but, in their eagerness to get closer to Chaucer, have drawn many questionable inferences from those facts. Uncertain as to the exact significance of the various appointments which Chaucer held, his engagement in diplomatic missions and his annuities, biographers have thought it necessary to find an explanation for what they suppose to be remarkable favours, and have assumed—cautiously in the case of careful scholars but boldly in that of popular writers—that Chaucer owed every enhancement of his fortune to his "great patron" John of Gaunt. In greater or less degree this conception appears in every biography since Nicolas. Professor Minto in his Encyclopedia Brittanica article[1] says with regard to the year 1386: "that was an unfortunate year for him; his patron, John of Gaunt, lost his ascendancy at court, and a commission which sat to inquire into the abuses of the preceding administration superseded Chaucer in his two comptrollerships. The return of Lancaster to power in 1389 again brightened his prospects; he was appointed clerk of the King's works," etc.

Similarly, Dr. Ward in his life of Chaucer, after mentioning that Chaucer and John of Gaunt were of approximately the same age, writes:[2] "Nothing could, accordingly, be more natural than that a more or less intimate relationship should have formed itself between them. This relation, there is reason to believe, afterwards

[1] Ed. Scribners 1878, vol. 5, p. 450.

[2] English Men of Letters. Harpers. 1879, p. 66.

ripened on Chaucer's part into one of distinct political partisanship." With regard to the loss of the controllerships Dr. Ward writes:[1] "The new administration" (i. e. that of Gloucester and his allies) "had as usual demanded its victims—and among their number was Chaucer. . . . The explanation usually given is that he fell as an adherent of John of Gaunt; perhaps a safer way of putting the matter would be to say that John of Gaunt was no longer in England to protect him." A little further on occurs the suggestion that Chaucer may have been removed because of "his previous official connection with Sir Nicholas Brembre, who, besides being hated in the city, had been accused of seeking to compass the deaths of the Duke and of some of his adherents."[2] Later, in connection with a discussion of Chaucer's probable attitude toward Wiclif, Dr. Ward writes:[3] "Moreover, as has been seen, his long connexion with John of Gaunt is a well-established fact; and it has thence been concluded that Chaucer fully shared the opinions and tendencies represented by his patron."

Dr. Ward's treatment is cautious and careful compared to that of Prof. Henry Morley in his "English Writers." For example, the latter writes:[4] "Lionel lived till 1368, but we shall find that in and after 1358 Chaucer's relations are with John of Gaunt, and the entries in the household of the Countess Elizabeth might imply no more than that Chaucer, page to John of Gaunt, was detached for service of the Countess upon her coming to London." A few pages further on[5] in the same volume occurs a paragraph on the life of John of Gaunt glossed "Chaucer's Patron." With regard to the grants of a pitcher of wine daily, and the two controllerships, Professor Morley writes:[6] "These successive gifts Chaucer owed to John of Gaunt, who, in this last period of his father's reign, took active part in the administration." And again,[7] "John of Gaunt had administered affairs of government. It was he, therefore, who had so freely used the power of the crown to bestow marks of favor upon Chaucer."[8] "It was his patron the Duke, therefore, who, towards the end of 1376, joined Chaucer with Sir John Burley, in some secret service of which the nature is not known."

[1] p. 104.

[2] It is curious that Dr. Ward did not realize that Chaucer could not possibly have belonged to the parties of John of Gaunt and of Brembre.

[3] p. 134.

[4] Vol. 5, p. 98. [5] p. 103. [6] p. 107. [7] p. 109. [8] p. 110.

Finally, after mentioning Chaucer's being "discharged" from his controllerships, Morley writes:[1] "During all this time Chaucer's patron John of Gaunt was away with an army in Portugal."

Such absolute certainty and boldness of statement as Professor Morley's is scarcely found again in reputable writers on Chaucer. Professor Lounsbury in his life of Chaucer implies rather cautiously that Chaucer lost his places in the Customs because of John of Gaunt's absence from the country, and as the result of an investigation of the customs.[2] Mr. Jusserand in his Literary History of England writes:[3] "For having remained faithful to his protectors, the King and John of Gaunt, Chaucer, looked upon with ill favour by the men then in power, of whom Gloucester was the head, lost his places and fell into want." F. J. Snell in his Age of Chaucer has similar statements, almost as bold as those of Professor Morley. [4] "John of Gaunt was the poet's life-long friend and patron." [5] "Chaucer was now an established favourite of John of Gaunt, through whose influence apparently he was accorded this desirable post," (i. e., the first controllership.) Most remarkable of all:[6] "Outwardly, much depended on the ascendency of John of Lancaster. If the Duke of Lancaster prospered, Chaucer prospered with him. When the Duke of Gloucester was uppermost, the poet's sky was over cast, and he had hard work to keep himself afloat."

The last quotations which I shall give on this point are from Skeat's life of Chaucer prefixed to the single volume edition of the poet's works in the Oxford series:[7] "As the duke of Gloucester was ill disposed towards his brother John, it is probable that we can thus account for the fact that, in December of this year, Chaucer was dismissed from both his offices, of Comptroller of Wool and Comptroller of Petty Customs, others being appointed in his place. This sudden and great loss reduced the poet from comparative wealth to poverty; he was compelled to raise money upon his pensions, which were assigned to John Scalby on May 1, 1388." On the same page: "1389. On May 3, Richard II suddenly took the government into his own hands. John of Gaunt returned to England soon afterwards, and effected an outward reconciliation between the King and the Duke of Gloucester. The Lancastrian

[1] p. 243. [2] Studies in Chaucer, vol. I, pp. 81-82. [3] Eng. trans., 1894, p. 312. [4] p. 131. [5] p. 149. [6] p. 230. [7] p. XIII.

party was now once more in power, and Chaucer was appointed Clerk of the King's Works," etc.

Closely connected with the question of Chaucer's relations with John of Gaunt, and indeed fundamental to it—as the constant reference in the foregoing extracts to the grants which Chaucer held would indicate—is the problem of the significance of Chaucer's annuities, offices, and diplomatic missions. Extracts from two writers on Chaucer's life will show how this problem has been treated. Professor Hales in his D. N. B. article [1] says of the first pension from the King: "This pension, it will be noticed, is given for good service done. . . . The pension is separate from his pay as a 'valettus' and must refer to some different service." Similarly Professor Lounsbury in his Studies in Chaucer writes: [2] "It is from the statement in this document about services already rendered that the inference is drawn that during these years he had been in close connection with the court." In regard to the grant of the wardship of Edward Staplegate, he says: [3] "This was a common method of rewarding favorites of the crown. In the roll which contains this grant it is said to be conferred upon 'our beloved esquire.'" By way of comment on the grant of a pitcher of wine daily, he writes: [4] "Though never graced with the title of poet laureate, Chaucer obtained at this same period what came to be one of the most distinguishing perquisites which attached itself to that office in later times." With regard to the offices: [5] "Chaucer was constantly employed in civil offices at home and in diplomatic missions abroad. In both cases it is very certain that the positions he filled were never in the nature of sinecures." As to the diplomatic missions [6]—"Their number and their variety, treating as they do of questions of peace and war, show the versatility of his talents as well as his wide knowledge of affairs. Nor can I avoid feeling that his appointment upon so many missions, some of them of a highly delicate and important nature, is presumptive evidence that he was not a young man at the time and must therefore have been born earlier than 1340 . . . . these appointments are proofs that can hardly be gainsaid of the value put upon his abilities and services. Then, as now, there must have been plenty of persons of ample leisure and lofty connections who

[1] Vol. 10, p. 157. [2] Vol. 1, p. 61. [3] idem, p. 65. [4] idem, p. 63. [5] idem, p. 66. [6] idem, p. 70.

were both ready and anxious to be pressed into the service of the state. That these should have been passed by, and a man chosen instead not furnished with high birth and already furnished with other duties, is a fact which indicates, if it does not show convincingly, the confidence reposed in his capacity and judgment." With regard to the controllership, Professor Lounsbury writes:[1] "The oath which Chaucer took at his appointment was the usual oath. . . . He was made controller of the port because he had earned the appointment by his services in various fields of activity, and because he was recognized as a man of business, fully qualified to discharge its duties." [2] "In 1385 he was granted a much greater favor" (than the right to have a deputy for the petty customs). "On the 17th of February of that year he obtained the privilege of nominating a permanent deputy. . . . It is possible that in the end it wrought him injury, so far as the retention of the post was concerned."

A merely casual reading of such statements as those I have given above must make it clear that they attempt to interpret the facts which we have about Chaucer, without taking into consideration their setting and connections—conditions in the courts of Edward III and Richard II, and the history of the period.[3] Surely it is time for an attempt to gain a basis of fact upon which we may judge the real significance of Chaucer's grants and his missions and from which we may determine as far as possible his relations with John of Gaunt. In the following pages then, I shall attempt first to discover the relative importance of Chaucer's place in the court, and the significance of his varied employments, and secondly to find out the certain connections between Chaucer and John of Gaunt. The means which I shall employ is that of a study of the lives of Chaucer's associates—his fellow esquires, and justices of the peace, and his friends—and a comparison of their careers with that of Chaucer to determine whether or not the grants he received indicate special favour or patronage, and whether it is necessary to assume the patronage of John of Gaunt in particular to explain any step in his career.

[1] Studies in Chaucer, p. 72. [2] idem, p. 74. [3] Note for example the statement on page 3 above that "the Duke of Gloucester was ill-disposed towards his brother John."

THE ESQUIRES OF THE KING'S HOUSEHOLD

Their Families

We have the names of the esquires of the king's household in two lists of 1368 and 1369, printed in the Chaucer Life Records.[1] In the study of the careers of these esquires the most difficult problem is to determine the families from which they were derived. Had they come from great families, of course, it would not have been hard to trace their pedigrees. But a long search through county histories and books of genealogy, has revealed the families of only a few, and those few in every case come from an unimportant line. It is clear then that they never were representatives of highly important families. A statement of the antecedents of such esquires as I have been able to trace, the names arranged in alphabetical order, follows.

John Beauchamp was almost certainly either that John Beauchamp of Holt who was executed in 1386, or his son. In either case he was descended from a younger branch of the Beauchamps of Warwick.[2]

Patrick Byker, who was King's "artillier" in the tower of London,[3] was the son of John de Byker who had held the same office before him.[4] William Byker, probably a relative, is mentioned from about 1370 on as holding that office.[5] I have been able to learn nothing further about the family.

Nicholas Careu: in the records one finds reference to Nicholas Careu the elder and Nicholas Careu the younger.[6] Since the elder was guardian of the privy seal from 1372 to 1377 [7] and in 1377 was one of the executors of the will of Edward III, it seems likely that the esquire was Nicholas Careu the younger. At any rate the younger was the son of the older [8] and they were certainly members of the family of Careu in Surrey.[9] The pedigrees of this family do not show Nicholas the younger (so far as I have found). But a Nicholas, Baron Carew, who may have been the keeper of the

[1] See page 13 ff. [2] Issues, P. 232, mem. 26. Peerage of England, Scotland, etc., by G. E. C., vol. 1, p. 278. [3] 1362 Cal. C. R., p. 373. [4] 35 Edw. III, p. 174 Cal. Rot. Pat. in Turr. Lon. [5] Devon's Issues, 1370, p. 33, Issues, P. 303, mem. 14. [6] Ancient Deeds 10681. [7] Rymer, p. 951, 1069. [8] C. R. 229, mem. 33 dorso, 12 Rich. II. [9] 1378 Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 143, 1381-5 Cal. Pat. Roll, passim, Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 125.

privy seal, does occur.[1] The name of his son, as given in the pedigree, is not Nicholas; consequently Nicholas, the younger, was probably not his eldest son. This last supposition is supported by certain statements in Westcote's Devonshire [2] where we are told that "Sir Nicholas Carew, Baron, of Carew Castle, Montgomery in Wales, married the daughter of Sir Hugh Conway of Haccomb, and had issue Thomas, Nicholas, Hugh," etc.

Roger Clebury. In Westcote's Devonshire [3] occurs an account of a family named Cloberry, of Bradston. In the course of his statement, which is devoid of dates or mention of lands other than Bradston, Westcote refers to two Rogers.

Several men of the name of William de Clopton are mentioned in the county histories. Unfortunately no facts appear in the records to connect any one of them with the esquire of that name. At any rate from the accounts given in Gage [4] and Morant [5] the following pedigree is clear:

Sir William de Clopton (20 Edw. III)	Thomas de Clopton
Sir William, Edmund, John, Walter, Thomas	William

The elder Sir William, according to Gage, married first Anet, daughter of Sir Thomas de Grey, and secondly Mary, daughter of Sir William Cockerel. With his second wife he received the manor and advowson of Hawsted and lands in Hawsted, Nowton, Great and Little Horningsherth and Bury St. Edmunds. Morant speaks of the family as an ancient one and traces it back to the time of Henry I.

Robert de Corby was son of Robert and Joan de Corby.[6] His father had been yeoman in the King's court and had received a number of grants from the King.[7]

Collard, or Nicholas, Dabrichecourt was a son of Nicholas Dabrichecourt, brother of Sir Eustace Dabridgecourt of Warwickshire.[8] The latter had won the favor of Philippa in France and had come to England when she was married to Edward III.

[1] Visitation of Surrey Harleian Soc. p. 17. [2] p. 528. Of course it is not certain that this Sir Nicholas was the Keeper of the Privy Seal. [3] p. 555. [4] Gage's History of Suffolk: Thingoe Hundred, p. 419. [5] Morant's Essex, vol. 2, p. 321. [6] Pat. Roll 291, mem. 1. [7] Cal. C. R., p. 496 (1345). Cal. Rot. Pat. Turr. Lon. 38 Edw. III, p. 178 b. [8] Visit of War (Harl.) p. 47, Beltz Mem. of Garter, p. 90.

George Felbrigge was, according to Blomefield's Norfolk,[1] descended from a younger branch of the Bigods. The head of this family was the Earl of Norfolk.

Sir Simon, third son of Hugh, Earl of Norfolk

|

Sir Roger

Sir Simon	John le Bigod
Sir Roger	Roger le Bigod
Sir Simon	Sir George

The younger branch of the family had assumed the name of Felbrigge from a town of that name in Norfolk. As will be seen, George Felbrigge came from the younger branch of a younger branch of the family, and his ancestors seem to have been neither influential nor wealthy.

Robert de Ferrer's pedigree was as follows:[2]

John Ferrers = Hawise d. of Sir Robert Muscegros.
Baron Ferrers |
Robert, 2nd baron = Agnes (?) d. of Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford

John, 3rd baron obit. 2 Apr. 1367	Robert died 1381

Since his brother died only a year before the date of the first of the lists, it is very likely that Robert became a member of the King's household, while still a younger son. His father, Robert, second baron Ferrers, was one of the Knights of the King's Chamber. He fought in the campaigns in France and Flanders.

Thomas Frowyk was probably a member of a prominent London family of merchants. Lysons writes of the family as follows:[3] "The manor of Oldfold was at a very early period the property of the Frowyks or Frowicks. Henry Frowyk, who was settled at London in 1329, was sixth in descent from Thomas Frowyk of the Oldfold, the first person mentioned in the pedigree of the family. . . . . Thomas Frowyk, a younger brother of Henry above mentioned, inherited the Oldfold estate, which continued in the family till his grandson's time." This Thomas Frowyk is mentioned in the Close Rolls between 1351 and 1353 as Justice of the Peace for

[1] Vol. 8, p. 107 ff. [2] Baker's Northampton, vol. 1, p. 123. [3] Parishes in Middlesex, etc., p. 228.

Middlesex, and in[1] 27 Edward III as lieutenant of the Queen's steward.

The connections of Thomas Hauteyn are not quite so clear but apparently he likewise was derived from a family of London merchants. Blomefield's Norfolk[2] tells of a family of Hauteyns of knightly rank. Sir John Hauteyn probably became a citizen of London in 16 Edward II and was subsequently receiver of the King's customs of wool at London. Even earlier than this, in 15 Edward I, a Walter Hawteyn was sheriff of London.[3] In 7 Edward III a John Hawteyn was alderman of a ward in London.[4] We can suppose some connection between Thomas Hauteyn and this family because he held certain tenements in London.[5]

John de Herlyng, who was usher of the King's chamber and the most important of the esquires in Chaucer's time, came of a family settled in Norfolk. Blomefield gives a pedigree of the family beginning with this John de Herlyng,[6] but is unable to trace his ancestry definitely. He finds mention of a certain Odo de Herlyng, but is forced to the conclusion that the family was an unimportant one before the time of John de Herlyng.

With regard to Rauf de Knyveton very little information is forthcoming. Glover's Derby[7] gives the pedigree of a family of Knivetons who possessed the manor of Bradley and says that there was a younger branch of the family which lived at Mercaston. Ralph, though not specifically mentioned, may have been a younger son of one of these branches.

Although Helmyng Leget was an important man in his own time—sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1401 and 1408,[8] and Justice of the Peace in Suffolk,[9]—Morant is able to give no information about his family. Perhaps his position in the society of the county was due in part to the fact that he married an heiress, Alice, daughter of Sir Thomas Mandeville.[10]

John Legge, who is on the lists as an esquire, but in the Patent Rolls is referred to chiefly as a serjeant at arms, was, according to H. T. Riley, son of Thomas Legge, mayor of London in 1347 and 1354.[11]

[1] Ancient Deeds A 9086. [2] Vol. 10, p. 426 ff. [3] Ancient Deeds A 1625. [4] idem, A 1472. [5] idem, A 7833. [6] Vol. 1, p. 319. [7] Vol. 2, p. 135, 6. [8] Morant's Essex, vol. 2, p. 123. [9] Cf. Cal. Pat. Roll. 1381-5, p. 254. [10] Morant vol. 2, p. 75. [11] Memorials, p. 450.

Robert Louth was evidently derived from a Hertfordshire family. A Robert de Louth was custodian of the castle of Hertford and supervisor of the city of Hertford in 32 Edward III [1] and between 1381 and 1385 was Justice of the Peace for Hertford.[2] Probably Robert de Louth was a younger son, for John, son and heir of Sir Roger de Louthe (in 44 Edward III) deeded land in Hertfordshire to Robert de Louthe, esquire, his uncle.[3]

John de Romesey comes of an eminent Southampton family of the town of Romsey [4] which can be traced back as far as 1228, when Walter of Romsey was sheriff of Hampshire. His pedigree is given as follows by Hoare: [5]

Walter de Romesey 34 Edward I.
|
Walter de Romesey 23 Edward III = Joan
|
John de Romesey = Margaret d. and
(Co. Somerset) heir of - - - ?

Hugh Strelley was a member of the family of Strelley (Straule) of Nottingham and Derby. From the fact that his name does not occur in the pedigree given in Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire [6] and that he held lands of Nicholas de Strelley by the fourth part of a knight's fee,[7] it is clear that he belonged to a subordinate branch of the family. Further, he was even a younger son of this secondary stock, for, as brother and heir of Philip de Strelley, son and heir of William de Strelley, he inherited lands in 47 Edward III.[8]

Gilbert Talbot was second son of Sir John Talbot of Richard's Castle in Herefordshire.[9]

Hugh Wake may be the Hugh Wake who married Joan de Wolverton and whom Lipscombe connects with the lordly family of Wake of Buckinghamshire.[10]

These eighteen or nineteen esquires, then, are the only ones in the long lists whose family connections I have been able to trace. Certain others—as for example the various Cheynes—Hugh, Roger,

[1] Cal. Rot. Pat. Turr. Lon., p. 169 b. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll index. [3] Ancient Deeds, D 4213. [4] Woodward, Wilks, Lockhart, History of Nottinghamshire, vol. 1, p. 352. [5] History of Wilts, vol. 3, Hundred of Cawdon, p. 13. [6] Vol. 2, p. 220. [7] Cal. Pat. Roll, 1392, p. 56. [8] C. R. 211, Mem. 38. [9] Cf. Nicolas: Scrope-Grosvenor Roll, vol. 2, p. 397. [10] Lipscombe's Buckinghamshire, vol. 4, p. 126. He is quite wrong as to the date of this Hugh's death. Cf. Close Rolls, 1361, pp. 228-9 which show that Hugh was living at this date.

Thomas, John and William—Robert la Souche, Simon de Burgh and Geoffrey Stucle—may have been derived from noble families of their name. In that case, however, they were certainly not in the direct line of descent, for their names do not appear in the pedigree of those families. On the other hand many of the names would seem to indicate that their possessors came from obscure families. In several cases, for example, esquires practically gave up their own names and were called by occupational names. So the Richard des Armes of the records was probably "Richard de Careswell vadlet del armes" [1] who had charge of the king's personal armour. Reynold Barbour is once called Reynold le Barber.[2] Roger Ferrour was one of the king's shoe-smiths,[3] and his personal name was Roger Bonyngton.[4] Robert Larderer is never mentioned in the records, but Robert Maghfeld, called king's larderer, is mentioned.[5] No Richard Waffrer occurs on the records (although the name occurs three times in the household lists), but Richard Markham, wafferer, occurs frequently.[6] Richard Leche, called king's surgeon,[7] was probably identical with Richard Irlonde, king's surgeon.[8] John Leche also was king's surgeon, but I have found mention of him under no other name.[9] Robert Vynour was vine-keeper or gardener to Edward III.[10] Certain of the other names, though apparently family names, seem to be of occupational or place origin, e. g. Thomas Spigurnel, Simon de Bukenham, John de Beverle, Henricus Almannia, Cornelius de Ybernia, William de York, etc. Finally some names by their very character could scarcely be the names of noble families, e. g. Walter Whithors, Walter Chippenham, John Cat, etc.

From what I have been able to find out about the families of some of these men, from the character of the names, and from the fact that the families of the great bulk of the esquires cannot be traced, it is clear that the esquires of the king's household were chiefly recruited either from the younger sons of knightly families, or from quite undistinguished stock. In three cases—those of John Legge, Thomas Hauteyn and Thomas Frowyk—it seems probable that they came—as Chaucer did—from merchants' families in London.

[1] Exchequer K. R. Accts. 392, 15. [2] Issues P. 220 (32 Edw. III). [3] 1378 Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 158. [4] Rich. II, Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 597. [5] Issues P. 222, mem. 21. [6] Devon's Issues 1370, p. 22, p. 34. Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 179. [7] 37 Edw. III. Issues P. 230, mem. unnumbered. [8] Devon's Issues 1370, pp. 103, 333. [9] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 178; 1383, p. 283. [10] Devon's Issues 1370, p. 115.

Appointment

We can scarcely expect any outright statement of the reasons in general or in particular for the appointment of esquires. Nevertheless I find two circumstances which may indicate the conditions of appointment; first, some previous connection of their fathers with the king's court, and second, some previous connection on their own part with the household of one of the king's children. Of those whose fathers or relatives had been in the court, may be mentioned John Beauchamp,[1] Patrick Byker,[2] Nicholas Careu,[3] Robert Corby,[4] Collard Dabrichecourt,[5] Robert de Ferrers,[6] and William Burele[7] (who was son of the Sir John de Burley with whom Chaucer was associated on one mission). Of course John Legge's father—as mayor of London—must have been known at court, and one of Thomas Hauteyn's progenitors had been receiver of king's customs at London.[8]

Even more interesting is the case of those esquires who before entering the king's service had been in the household of one of his children—i. e. Edward the Black Prince, Lionel, duke of Clarence (or his wife), John of Gaunt, Isabella, wife of Ingelram de Coucy, and Edmund, Count of Cambridge. Roger Archer, Griffith de la Chambre, Henry de Almaigne and Richard Torperle seem to have been in the service of Isabella, the king's daughter, for, in the grants of annuities which they received, special mention is made of their service to her.[9] Possibly they were always in her service. Stephen Romylowe is expressly called esquire of Edward prince of Wales (the Black Prince), and he held an annuity from that prince.[10] Richard Wirle signed an indenture to serve John of Gaunt as an esquire in 46 Edward III, after the date at which he is mentioned in the household books.[11] Since he seems never to have received an annuity from the king, or a grant—except in one instance for his wages in the wars—it seems likely that he was never actually in the king's service, but rather in that of John of Gaunt. Robert Ursewyk was connected in some way with John of Gaunt and also with Edmund, Count of Cambridge, son of Edward III.[12] Roger Mareschall, John Joce and Robert Bardolf held annuities of twenty

[1] Cf. p. 6, supra. [2] p. 6. [3] p. 6. [4] p. 7. [5] p. 7. [6] p. 8. [7] Cal. Pat. Roll, 1378, p. 283. [8] Cf. p. 9, supra. [9] Issues P. 241, mem. 11. P. 239, mem. 15. P. 301, mem. 10. Pat. Roll 272, mem. 22, 285 mem. 25. [10] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 197, 1385, p. 26. [11] Duchy of Lancaster Registers No. 13. f. 125 dorso. [12] idem f. 94. Pat. Roll, 274, mem. 29.

pounds each per annum from Lionel Duke of Clarence [1] and so were probably at one time in his service. Finally the most interesting case of all is that of Geoffrey Stucle, whose career and employments curiously parallel Chaucer's and who in 29 Edward III was valet to Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster.[2]

Classification

The two lists in the household books classify the members of the household in different ways—one list according to function and the other, apparently, according to length of service. The first is the system according to which the schedule of names conjecturally dated December 1368 [3] was made, and the latter is the system governing the list of September 1, 1369 (*number 58 Chaucer Records, page 172.*) A glance at the second of these and comparison with the first will show how it was made up. It classifies the esquires in two groups— "esquiers de greindre estat" and "esquiers de meindre degree." Looking at the names of the "esquiers de greindre estat" we notice that the first thirteen are names which appear in the group of "esquiers" of 1368, that the next ten are identical—even in the order of occurrence—with the list of "seriantz des armes" of 1368, that the following seven are the first seven in the list of "sergeantz des offices parvantz furrures a chaperon" of 1368 (in the same order), that then Andrew Tyndale who in 1368 was an "esquier ma dame" appears, and is followed by the rest of the "sergeantz des offices parvantz furrures," etc., (in the same order as in 1368) that the next six were in 1368 "esquiers ma dame," and that finally occur ten names not found in the lists of 1368. From this comparison it is clear that the list of 1369 was made up from a series of lists of different departments in the king's household.

The list of "esquiers de meindre degree" of 1369 was doubtless made in the same way, although the evidence is not so conclusive. The first twenty-two names correspond to names in the list of esquiers of 1368; the next eleven occur in the list of "esquiers survenantz" of 1368; the following five appear among the "esquiers ma dame" of 1368; the next thirteen do not occur in the lists of 1368; but the following eight correspond even in order to the list of "esquiers fauconers" of 1368.

[1] Cal. Pat. Roll 1383, p. 326. [2] Issues, P. 212, mem. 22, 27. [3] Printed as number 53 of the Chaucer Records (page 162).

It is therefore clear that we have here a cross division. That the list of 1368 gives a division according to function is clear from the titles of all groups except one. The esquires classified as "faucon-ers," "survenantz," "ma dame," etc., performed the functions suggested by those titles—a fact which can be demonstrated by many references to the function of these men in other documents. In the case of the one exception, the "sergeantz des offices parvantz furrures a chaperon," it is clear that they performed duties similar to those of the "esquiers survenantz." For example, Richard des Armes was valet of the king's arms;[1] William Blacomore was one of the king's buyers, subordinate to the purveyor of fresh and salt fish,[2] John de Conyngsby was likewise a buyer of victuals for the household,[3] John Goderik and John Gosedene were cooks in the household;[4] Richard Leche was king's surgeon,[5] Thomas de Stanes was sub-purveyor of the poultry;[6] William Strete was the king's butler;[7] Edmond de Tettesworth was the king's baker,[8] etc. Hence it is clear that all these performed duties which in the main were of a menial character.

On the other hand, the division into two groups in the list of 1369 seems to indicate not the function of the esquires, but their rank in the household. Their rank, in turn, appears to be determined by various considerations—function (all the falconers of 1368 are enrolled among the esquires of less degree in 1369), length of service, and to some extent considerations which are not manifest. That length of service played some part in the division seems clear from a study and comparison of the careers of the various men. Since we are interested in knowing particularly the significance of the classification of Chaucer who appeared in 1368 as an esquier, I shall confine myself to a consideration of the "esquiers" of that year. The names of the esquires of greater degree with the date at which they are first mentioned in connection with the household (in documents outside the household books) follow:

Johan Herlyng. 18 Edward III (1344)[9]
Wauter Whithors. 1343[10]
Johan de Beverle. 36 Edward III (1362)[11]

[1] Exchequer, K. R. Accts. 392, 12, f. 36 dorso. idem. No. 15. [2] C. R. 1359 p. 545. [3] Pat. Roll 276, mem. 4. [4] Pat. Roll 1378, p. 212, Devon's Issues, 1370, p. 311. [5] idem. P. 230 mem. not numbered. [6] C. R. 1359, p. 545. [7] Issues, P. 228, mem. 38. [8] Pat. Roll, 1378, p. 224. [9] Abb. Rot. Orig., vol. 2, p. 165. [10] C. R., p. 203. [11] Pat. Roll 265, mem. 17.

Johan Romeseye. 35 Edward III (1361)[1]
Wauter Walsh. 36 Edward III. (1362)[2]
Roger Clebury. 1349[3]
Helmyng Leget. 33 Edward III. (1359)[4]
Rauf de Knyveton. 35 Edward III. (1361)[5]
Richard Torperle. 38 Edward III. (1364)[6]
Johan Northrugg. 37 Edward III. (1363)[7]
Hanyn Narrett. 38 Edward III. (1364)[8]
Symond de Bokenham. 37 Edward III. (1363)[9]
Johan Legg. 36 Edward III. (1362)[10]

The "esquiers de meindre degree" follow:

Hugh Wake. 1353[11]
Piers de Cornewaill. 37 Edward III. (1363)[12]
Robert Ferrers. 1370[13]
Robert Corby. 43 Edward III. (1369)[14]
Collard Daubrichecourt. 44 Edward III. (1370)[15]
Thomas Hauteyn. 41 Edward III. (1367)[16]
Hugh Cheyne. 32 Edward III. (1358)[17]
Thomas Foxle.[18]
Geffrey Chaucer.
Geffrey Styuecle. 31 Edward III. (1356)[19]
Symon de Burgh. 44 Edward III. (1370)[20]
Johan de Tychemerssh. No mention outside of household books, where he appears for first time in 1368.
Robert la Zouche. 29 Edward III. (1355)[21]
Esmon Rose. 17 Edward III. (1343)[22]
Laurence Hauberk. 1370[23]
Griffith del Chambre. 28 Edward III. (1354)[24]
Johan de Thorpe. 30 Edward III. (1356)[25]

[1] Pat. Roll 264, mem. 24. [2] idem 266, mem. 47. [3] idem, p. 227. [4] Issues, P. 223, mem. 32. [5] Pat. Roll 264, mem. 18. [6] idem 272, mem. 22. [7] Issues, P. 232, mem. 5. [8] Issues, P. 237, mem. 17. [9] Pat. Roll 267, mem. 7. [10] idem 266, mem. 3. [11] idem, p. 380. [12] idem 268, mem. 18. [13] Rymer III, 902. [14] C. R. mem. 23, dorso. The last two are difficult to distinguish from their fathers of the same name who had been in the King's court before their time. [15] Pat. Roll 281, mem. 18. [16] idem 1399, p. 65. Issues, P. 250, mem. 2. [17] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 248. [18] I cannot identify him surely; a Thomas de Foxle was in the King's court in 4 Edw. III ff (Abb. Rot. Orig. II, p. 39); he was growing old in 1352 (Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 270) and died 30 Edw. III (Cal. Inq. P. M. II 220, leaving his property to a son and heir John). [19] Issues, P. 217, mem. 114. In 29 Edw. III in service of Countess of Ulster. [20] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 189. [21] Issues, P. 213, mem. 24. [22] Cal. Pat. Roll 1348, p. 39. [23] Issues 1370, Devon, pp. 136, 444. [24] Issues, P. 294, mem. 18. [25] idem, P. 214, mem. 8.

Thomas Hertfordyngbury. 41 Edward III. (1367)[1]
Hugh Straule. No certain mention as valet or esquire.
Hugh Lyngeyn. 37 Edward III. (1363)[2]
Nicholas Prage. 33 Edward III. (1359)[3]
Richard Wirle. No record as valet or esquire of the king.

A comparison of the two sections shows that the first contains the names of two men whose service goes back as far as 1343, 1344, and that it contains the name of no one who was not by 1364 associated with the court. The second section, on the other hand, contains but one name of a date earlier than 1353 and several which do not occur in the records before the time of this document, or in fact until a year or two later. The fact however that in a number of cases the second section contains names of men who entered the household years before others whose names occur in the first section makes it seem probable that special circumstances might influence the classification of a given esquire.

Linked with this problem of classification is one of nomenclature—the use of the terms "vallettus" and "esquier" (or, the Latin equivalents of the latter, "armiger" and "scutifer"). Chaucer scholars have generally assumed that the term "esquier" represents a rank higher than "vallettus." But they give no evidence in support of this distinction, and we are interested in knowing whether it is correct or not. A first glance at the list of 1369, to be sure, and the observation that cooks and falconers, a shoe-smith [4] and a larderer [5] are called "esquiers" there, might lead one to think that the word can have but a vague force and no real difference in meaning from "vallettus." But an examination of other documents shows that the use of the term "esquier" in the household lists does not represent the customary usage of the time. It is to be noted for example that many of the "esquiers" of 1369 (practically all of the "esquiers des offices" [6] etc., and the "esquiers survenantz" of 1368) are not called esquires in the list of 1368, the Patent Rolls, Close Rolls, Issue Rolls or Fine Rolls. William de Risceby and Thomas Spigurnell are the only clear exceptions to this rule. Of the "esquiers survenantz" I have noted eighteen references with mention of title, in seventeen of which the man

[1] Pat. Roll 275, mem. 13. [2] idem 267, mem. 37. [3] Exchequer K. R. Accts., Bundle 392, No. 15. [4] Pat. Roll 1378, p. 158. [5] Issues (Devon) 1370, p. 45. [6] For indication of their function see p. 14.

named is called "vallettus" or "serviens." Of the "serjeantz des offices," Richard des Armes is called "vallettus" or "serviens" in twelve different entries, never "esquier."[1] I have noted thirty-five other references to men in the same classification with the title "vallettus."[2] It is clear then that although the usage is not strict these men were really of the rank of "vallettus," and that this rank was lower than that of "esquier." Possibly the household books used the term "esquier" in this loose way out of courtesy, but the other documents—which were strictly official—for the most part used it more exactly in accordance with a man's actual rank.

From a study of the records of the "esquiers" of 1368 (the group to which in that year Chaucer belonged) we learn further conditions under which the terms "vallettus" and "armiger" or "scutifer" are used. In nearly all cases these esquires in the early years of their career, are called "vallettus," after some years of service they are occasionally called "armiger," and finally after the passage of more years are always called "armiger" or "scutifer." Demonstration of this fact would take pages of mere references; but it can be indicated in a typical case, that of Geoffrey Stucle, chosen because of the fact that his classification is throughout the same as Chaucer's. In 31, 33, and 35 Edward III he is called "vallettus," in 36 Edward III, he appears once as "scutifer," and twice as "vallettus"; in 37 Edward III he is once named "vallettus"; in 38 Edward III he is called once "scutifer" and another time "vallettus"; in 41 Edward III he is mentioned twice as "vallettus"; in 42 and 43 Edward III he is "armiger"; in 47 Edward III he is once "vallettus" and once "armiger"; in 49 Edward III he is called "armiger" twice; in 50 Edward III, and 1 and 2 Richard II he is called "armiger."[3] From this and the other cases in the list of esquires, it is clear that the term "esquier" (the equivalent of scutifer and armiger) indicates a rank above that of "vallettus." The members of Chaucer's group, in nearly every case, were at first entitled "valletti" and then in course of time became "esquiers."

[1] Pat. Roll 265, mem. 21, 279, mem. 5, 273, mem. 15, 355, mem. 8, Issues, P. 207, mem. 4, P. 217, mem. 29, etc. [2] Pat. Roll 276, mem. 4, Issues, P. 237, Pat. Roll 265, mem. 14, 266, mem. 9, idem, mem. 47, etc. [3] Pat. Roll 269, mem. 43, 273 mem. 35, 263 mem. 1, 275 mem. 24, 293 mem. 19, 267 mem. 21, Issues P. 223, mem. 17, 222 mem. 20, A 169 mem. 130, P. 229, mem. 22, mem. 25 (twice) P. 217, mem. 14, 18, P. 235, mem. 1, 248 mem. not numbered, 249 mem. 4, 264 mem. not numbered, 262 mem. 9, 271 mem. 17, 273 mem. 20, 295 mem. 11.

Whatever may be the conclusion with regard to the meaning of those titles, however, it is clear, from the facts cited above, that the list of "esquiers" of 1368 and not that of the "esquiers de meindre degree" of 1369, gives the names of the men who were actually in the same class as Chaucer. Consequently in the consideration of the esquires which follows greater attention will be paid to the "esquiers" of 1368 than to the other classes.

Services

With regard to the services which the Household Books prescribe for the esquires, I shall say nothing. In the public records, however, I have found special services to which the individual esquires were assigned. In the first place certain of these men—even those who appear in the list of 1368 as "esquiers," and in that of 1369 as "esquiers de greindre estat," or "esquiers de meindre degree"—performed special functions of a character which makes it seem unlikely that they ever did the service which the Household Books required of an esquire of the king's household. In the list of 1368, for example, Esmon Rose was custodian of the great horses of the king,[1] Hugh Lyngeyn was a buyer of the household,[2] Nicholas Prage was first king's minstrel, and later serjeant at arms,[3] Simond de Bokenham was chief serjeant of the larder,[4] and John Legge was serjeant at arms.[5]

Secondly, certain of the esquires held special offices in the king's chamber. John Herlyng and Walter Walsh were ushers of the king's chamber.[6] John de Beauchamp was keeper of the king's jewels or receiver of the king's chamber for some years up to 11 Richard II;[7] then for a short time he was Seneschall (steward) of the king's household.[8] Thomas Cheyne was in 43 Edward III keeper of the keys of the coffers of the king's jewels.[9] John de Salesbury was at different times called usher of the king's chamber and keeper of the king's jewels.[10] Helmyng Leget was from 1362 for many years receiver of the king's chamber, his business being to keep the king's money, receive it from various people and pay it out.[11]

[1] Issues, P. 216, mem. 18. [2] Pat. Roll 1384, p. 435. [3] Issues, P. 228, mem. 24, 36 Edw. III, P. 273, mem. 11, 50 Edw. III. [4] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 165. [5] Rymer III, 2, 891. [6] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 133, idem p. 150. [7] Cal. Pat. Roll 1384, p. 488. [8] Issues, P. 316, mem. 2. [9] Pat. Roll 279, mem. 33. [10] Cal. Pat. Roll 1385, p. 15, Cal. Pat. Roll 1381-5 passim. [11] Rymer, vol. 3, p. 911.

Thirdly, esquires were frequently being sent about England on the king's business. For example in 1385 Simon de Bukenham was appointed buyer of horses for the king's expedition into Scotland;[1] in 1370 Laurence Hauberk was sent to Berwick-upon-Tweed and from there by sea-coast to retain shipping for the passage of Robert Knolles to Normandy;[2] similarly at other times Helmyng Leget and John Romesey, John de Salesbury and Thomas Spigurnell were detailed to take ships for royal expeditions.[3] Again, Walter Whithors in 1370 was sent to York to borrow money from divers abbots, priors and others for the king's use,[4] in 1370 John de Beauchamp was sent to the abbot of Gloucester to borrow money for the king's use,[5] and in 7 Richard II Walter Chippenham was assigned to raise money for the king's use out of the lands of the late Edmund Mortimer, Count of March.[6] In 5 Richard II Simon de Burgh was appointed to inquire into the possessions held by the rebels who had lately risen against the king in Cambridge.[7] In 47 Edward III, Nicholas Dabridgecourt was appointed to convey the children of Charles of Bloys from the custody of Roger Beauchamp to that of Robert de Morton.[8] Of less importance but equal frequency are the employments of esquires to convey money from the king's treasury or from some customs house to the king's wardrobe; John de Beauchamp de Holt le ffitz, Hugh Cheyne, Rauf de Knyveton, Walter Chippenham and Robert la Zouche were at various times so employed.[9]

Of course during the King's wars many of the esquires served in the army abroad. In the Issues of the Exchequer for 1370, for example, many entries of this type appear—John de Beverle—£107 15 s. 5 d. due in the wardrobe for the expenses of himself, his men at arms and archers in the war. *Devon p. 483.* Hugh Cheyne, *idem, p. 449.* Robert de Corby, *idem, p. 461.* Collard Dabridgecourt, *p. 461.* Helming Leget, *idem p. 447.* John Legge, *idem p. 449.* Thomas Spigurnell, *p. 490,* etc.

Most interesting with relation to Chaucer, however, is the employment of esquires on missions abroad. Apparently certain individuals were assigned especially to this kind of business and

[1] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 579. [2] Devon's Issues, p. 136. [3] Issues, P. 270, mem. not numbered, P. 262, mem. 13, P. 298, mem. 23. Rymer, vol. 3, p. 90. [4] Devon's Issues, p. 111. [5] idem, p. 153. [6] Issues, P. 308, mem. 6. Similarly Geoffrey Stucle, P. 298, mem. 23. [7] idem, P. 305, mem. 3. [8] idem, P. 262, mem. 14. [9] Issues, P. 229, mem. 24, P. 217, mem. 22, Devon, p. 156, P. 281, mem. 2, P. 213, mem. 24, P. 229, mem. 19.

many of these were kept almost constantly engaged in it. For example, George Felbrig, in 51 Edward III, was sent on the King's secret business to John Duke of Brittany in Flanders.[1] In 2 Richard II he was sent with John Burle and others on King's secret business to Milan.[2] In 4 Richard II he was sent to the King of the Romans and of Bohemia on secret business touching the King's marriage.[3] In 5 Richard II he was sent again to Flanders.[4] In 11 Richard II (being then Knight of the King's chamber) he was sent to Middelburgh to receive the homage of the Duke of Gueldres,[5] and again in 14 Richard II he was sent on the King's business to the King of the Romans and of Bohemia.[6] That the service was not a special honour but merely a business function of the esquire is clear from the fact that Felbrig was on one occasion called, "King's messenger beyond seas."[7]

Similarly Geoffrey Stucle (whose career, I have already pointed out, closely parallels Chaucer's) made many voyages abroad in the King's business between 33 Edward III and 2 Richard II. In 33 Edward III, and again in 35 Edward III, he was sent to Normandy on the King's business.[8] On many of his missions he merely carried letters to John of Gaunt, (in Devon's Issues 1370, for example, five such missions in a single year are mentioned), or to various nobles directing them to arm themselves for an expedition under John of Gaunt.[9] Likewise Stephen Romylowe was employed on many missions from 25 Edward III on.[10] In 30 Edward III he was sent "in nuncio domini Regis" to Flanders,[11] in 31 Edward III on another mission,[12] in 32 Edward III with John de Beauchamp, banneret, to Holland, Flanders, Zealand, etc.[13] These are the most important examples of such employment, but many other esquires—notably John Padbury, who in 1368 was an "esquier survenant"[14]—made occasional voyages.

Rewards

The regular pay of an esquire of the household was seven pence halfpenny a day.[15] The pay of a King's sergeant at arms was

[1] Issues, P. 274, mem. 11. [2] idem, P. 298, mem. 20. [3] idem, P. 303, mem. 2. [4] idem, P. 305, mem. 13. [5] idem, P. 316, mem. 2. [6] idem, P. 323, mem. 5. [7] Cal. Pat. Roll 1384, p. 367. [8] Issues, P. 223, mem. 17, A 169, mem. 30, mem. 38. [9] idem, P. 262, mem. 9. [10] idem 25 Edw. III, P. mem. 21, 37. [11] idem, P. 214, mem. not numbered. [12] idem P. 217, mem. 18. [13] idem P. 220, mem. 15. [14] Issues, P. 294 (?) mem. 20, P. 211, mem. 7, P. 214, mem. 23, P. 218, mem. 2, etc. [15] Cal. Pat. Roll 1380, p. 539, 1378, p. 288.

twelve pence a day—a sum usually granted for life.[1] It is to be observed, however, that the sergeants-at-arms received very few other grants. The esquires, on the other hand, received extremely valuable grants in great numbers. In particular they were given annuities, grants of land, grants of office, custody of lands belonging to heirs under age, usually with marriage of the heir, and corrodies at monasteries.

Taking up the first of these I shall confine myself to the "esquiers" of 1368, since—from Chaucer's position in the lists in that year and in 1369—they would seem to be the men with whom Chaucer is to be associated. In stating the amounts of the annuities I shall give the total sum which each man received. The names follow in the order of the lists of 1368.

Johan de Herlyng, £ 40, + £ 20 + £ 13, 10 s. 1 d. + £ 12, 10s.[2]
Wauter Whithors, £ 40.[3]
Thomas Cheyne, £ 20.[4]
Johan de Beverle, £ 40, 8s. 9d.[5]
Johan de Romesey, £ 20.[6]
Wauter Walssh, £ 20.[7]
Hugh Wake, £ 40.[8]
Roger Clebury, £ 10.[9]
Piers de Cornewaill, £ 40.[10]
Robert de Ferers, no annuity found.
Elmyn Leget, 20m.[11]
Robert de Corby, £ 10.[12]
Collard Dabrichecourt, £ 10.[13]
Thomas Hauteyn, £ 10.[14]
Hugh Cheyne, 10m.[15]
Thomas Foxle—no information whatever.*
Geffrey Chaucer.
Geffrey Stucle, £ 20.[16]
Simond de Burgh, £ 10 + 10m.[17]

[1] Richard Imworth, Thomas Stafford, Thomas Staples, Wauter de Leycester, etc., had grants of 12d. daily for life. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 133. [3] idem 1386, p. 146. [4] Issues A, 169, mem. 16. [5] Devon's Issues 1370, p. 35. [6] idem, p. 29. [7] Issues, P. 258, mem. 14. [8] Devon's Issues 1370, p. 372. [9] P. 216, mem. 38. [10] P. 241, mem. 11. [11] Pat. Roll 260, mem. 3. [12] idem 291, mem. 1. [13] idem 281, mem. 18. [14] Issues, P. 250, mem. 2. [15] Pat. Roll 255, mem. 26. [16] Devon's Issues 1370, p. 301. [17] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, pp. 189, 192.

* Outside of these lists I have been able to find no information about these men.

Johan Tichemerssh—no information whatever.*
Robert la Souche, £ 10.[1]
Esmon Rose (and wife, Agnes Archer) 40m.[2]
Laurence Hauberk—no certain information as esquire.
Griffith de la Chambre, £ 20.[3]
Johan de Thorp, 10m.[4]
Raulyn Erchedeakne—no information whatever.*
Rauf de Knyveton, 10m.[5]
Thomas Hertfordyngbury, £ 10.[6]
Hugh Strelley, 40m.[7]
Hugh Lyngeyn, £ 20.[8]
Nicholas Prage, 10m.[9]
Richard Torperle, 12 d. daily.[10]
Richard Wirle, no annuity.
Johan Northrugge, 10m.[11]
Hanyn Narrett, £ 10.[12]
Simond de Bokenham, £ 10.[13]
Johan Legge, 12 d. daily.[14]

In only two cases in which we find other information about an esquire do we find no annuity. In a few cases, I have been able to find out nothing at all about the men. In all others, annuities ranging from ten marks up to £ 86 are found. Apparently then the receipt of an annuity was absolutely a normal feature of the career of an esquire.

None of the other forms of grants was given so systematically and uniformly as that of annuities, but all of the others were very common. The nature and extent of the grants of land, and of guardianships, will appear in the accounts of the careers of individual esquires. They are so irregular in their character, are changed so frequently and are given on such varying conditions, that an accurate list could scarcely be made.

The matter of grants of offices, particularly in the customs, is, however, more easy to handle. At the time when Chaucer was given his controllership, offices in the customs seem to have been used

[1] Issues, P. 228, mem. 3. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 187. [3] Issues P. 258, mem. 12. [4] Cal. Pat. 1378, p. 157. [5] Devon's Issues, 1370, p. 156. [6] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 217. [7] Pat. Roll 295, mem. 4. [8] Pat. Roll 1399, p. 176. [9] Devon's Issues 1370, p. 216. [10] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 150. [11] Issues, P. 237, mem. 17. [12] idem P. 237, mem. 17. [13] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 165. [14] idem, p. 186.

* See note, preceding page.

regularly as sinecures for the esquires. In 1353 Griffith de la Chambre was granted the office of gauging of wine in the towns of Lenn and Great Yarmouth.[1] At the same time Roger Clebury received a similar grant.[2] In 1343 William de Clopton had a grant for life of the collectorship of the port of London with wages of £ 20. Apparently he did not actually exercise the office because certain merchants to whom the king had farmed the customs of the realm were directed to pay him his wages.[3] In 1347 he and John Herlyng—another esquire—were collectors of the petty customs in London.[4] In 1352 and again in 1355 his deputy is specifically mentioned.[5] In 1346 John de Herlyng was granted the office of controller of customs in Boston (Pat. Roll p. 204). In 1348 he was granted the office of controller of wools, hides and wool-fells, wines and all other merchandise at Newcastle-upon-Tyne with this added provision, "furthermore because he stays continually in the King's company by his order, he may substitute for himself a deputy in the said office," etc.[6] In 1352 he was controller of the customs in the port of Boston and likewise in that of Lenne—with provision in the same terms as those above for a deputy in the latter office —and collector of the petty custom in London—with deputy.[7] In 1359 he surrendered the office of controller of customs at Boston for an annuity of ten marks.[8] At one time he was also controller in the port of St. Botolph.[9] From the fact that the records show Herlyng was constantly in the King's court, it is clear that he exercised all these offices by deputy.

In 35 Edward III Helmyng Leget was granted the office of keeper of the smaller piece of the seal for recognizances of debts in London,[10] with power to execute the office by deputy. He held this office until 1389.[11] Edmund Rose held the office of keeper of the smaller piece of the seal in Norwich, with deputy.[12] John de Thorp was in 1380 appointed controller of customs of wines, wools, etc. at Southampton on condition that he execute the office in person.[13] Walter Whithors held the offices of keeper of the smaller piece of the seal in York, in 1348, and tronager of wool in the port of Lenne in 1352 with deputy in both offices.[14]

[1] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 411. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll 1352, p. 411. [3] C. R. 1343, p. 194. [4] Rymer, vol. 3, p. 115. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll, 1352, p. 327; C. R. 1355, p. 166. [6] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 130. [7] Cal. Pat. Roll, 1352, pp. 327, 348, 355. [8] idem 1378, p. 133. [9] Devon's Issues, 1370, p. 381. [10] Cal. Pat. Roll 1377-8, p. 184. [11] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 106. [12] Idem 1384, p. 380. [13] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 564. [14] idem, pp. 143, 293.

In addition to offices in the customs, places as parker of a King's forest, or keeper of a royal castle were frequently given to the esquires. So Hugh Cheyne in 1378 had the custody of Shrewsbury Castle with wages of seven pence halfpenny therefor.[1] Helmyng Leget and Thomas Cheyne at various times held the office of constable of Windsor Castle.[2] John de Beverle and Robert Corby likewise had the constableship of the castle of Ledes.[3] William Archebald was forester of the Forest of Braden.[4] John de Beverle was parker of Eltham parks.[5] Walter Whithors in 1349 was steward of the forest of Galtres. Many more examples of such grants of offices could be given.

Many of the esquires received corrodies—in most cases probably commuted for a certain yearly sum. For example, William Archebald held a corrody at Glastonbury from 49 Edward III [6] on and yet in 1378 is stated in the Patent Rolls to have been retained to stay with the King.[7] So it could be shown in most cases that esquires holding corrodies did not by any means live constantly in their monasteries. William Gambon, especially, could scarcely have done so since he held corrodies at Salop, (Shrewsbury), Hayles, Haylyng, St. Oswald de Nostell, Coventre and Wenlok, at the same time.[8] Other esquires who held corrodies and the names of their monasteries follow: John Beauchamp, Pershoore (Wigorn);[9] John Salesbury, Stanlee;[10] Simon de Bokenham, Ely;[11] Helmyng Leget, Ramsey;[12] Roger Clebury, Shrewsbury;[13] Peter Cornwaill, Redyng;[14] John Herlyng, Convent of Church of Christ, Canterbury;[15] Hugh Lyngeyn, Dunstaple;[16] Stephen Romylowe, Bardenay.[17]

Grants of wine are scarcely so common as the other kinds of grants and, so far as I have found, they are not usually given to prominent esquires. John Roos had a grant of two tuns of wine yearly;[18] William Risceby of "one dolium" or two pipes of Gascon wine;[19] William Strete and William Archebald each of one tun of Gascon wine yearly;[20] John De Beverle and Thomas Cheyne each of two dolia of Gascon wine yearly;[21] and Hugh Lyngeyn of one tun of red wine of Gascony yearly.[22]

[1] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 248. [2] Pat. Roll 279, mem. 33. [3] idem 272, mem. 27, Exchequer K. R. Accts. 393-7. [4] Pat. Roll 290, mem. 13. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378-80, p. 143. [6] C. R. 213, mem. 17. [7] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 135. [8] C R. 235, mem. 22, dorso. [9] C. R. 228, mem. 4, dorso. [10] idem 235, mem. 31 dorso. [11] C. R. 235, mem. 26 dorso. [12] C. R. 235, mem. 10 dorso. [13] Cal. C. R. 1356, p. 334. [14] C. R. 215, mem. 7 dorso. [15] C. R. 222, mem. 29 dorso. [16] C. R. 226, mem. 26 dorso. [17] C. R. 221, mem. 41 dorso. [18] Cal. Pat. Roll 1384, p. 446. [19] Pat. Roll 289, mem. 25. [20] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, pp. 135, 277. [21] Pat. Roll 271, mem. 21. [22] Cal. Pat. Roll 1399, p. 185.

One feature of the form of royal grants remains to be mentioned. Writers on Chaucer have frequently called attention to the fact that his grants contain a statement that they are made for good service done.[1] This is merely a regular part of the form of a grant. Any enrollments of grants—such as those noted on the preceding page—will give examples of the use of this phrase. Further, the form of grant practically always includes a characterization of the grantee as "dilectus vallettus," "dilectus serviens," "dilectus armiger," etc.

Marriage

The wives of the esquires came chiefly from two classes—first, the "domicellae" of the queen's retinue, and second, the daughters and heiresses of country gentlemen. Esquires who married wives from the second class frequently owed a great part of their importance in the county to the estates which their wives brought. So, frequently in the county histories occurs an account of some esquire whose family and antecedents the writer has been unable to trace, but who was prominent in the county—sheriff perhaps or Knight of the Shire—as a result of the lands he held in right of his wife. An example of this is Helmyng Leget, who was member of Parliament for Essex in 7 and 9 Henry IV, and sheriff in 1401 and 1408. He had married Alice, daughter and coheir of Sir Thomas Mandeville and received the estates of Stapleford-Taney, Bromfield, Chatham Hall in Great Waltham and Eastwick in Hertfordshire.[2] Similarly John de Salesbury, who had received from the King a grant of the custody of the estates of John de Hastang defunct, and of the marriage of the latter's daughter and heir Johanna, married the lady himself and held in her right extensive lands.[3]

John Beauchamp married Joan, daughter and heir of Robert le Fitzwyth.[4] Simond de Bokenham married Matilda Gerounde, who brought him the only land he possessed at his death.[5] Hugh Cheyne married Joan, daughter and heir of John de Wodeford.[6] Robert Corby married Alice, daughter and heir of Sir John Gousall.[7] Collard Dabrichecourt married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of

[1] Cf. Hales, Lounsbury ante. [2] Morant's Essex vol. 2, p. 75; vol. 1, part 2, p. 179. [3] Pat. Roll 292, mem. 21, idem 289, mem. 30, Dugdale's Warwick, p. 313. [4] Ancient Deeds, A 8171. [5] Pat. Roll 267, mem. 7, Inq. P. M. vol. 3, p. 173. [6] Abb. Rot. Orig. II, 264. [7] Hasted's Kent II, 428.

Sibilla, daughter of Thomas de Saye, and held in her right Strathfield-Saye.[1] George Felbrig married Margaret, daughter of Elizabeth dame de Aspall, and received with her certain lands in Norfolk and Suffolk.[2] Robert Ferrers married Elizabeth Boteler, daughter and heir of William Boteler of Wemme.[3] John Legge married Agnes de Northwode, coheir of the manour of Ertindon in Surrey.[4] Hugh Wake married Joan de Wolverton and received lands with her.[5] Walter Walssh married Joan Duylle, widow of John Fletcher, called "bel," and received with her the house of Gravebury, which she and her former husband had held.[6] Walter Whithors married Mabel, daughter and coheir of Philip Niweham (or Newnham.)[7]

Even more interesting—because of their analogy with Chaucer's marriage—are the instances of marriage with the queen's damsels. In one case, at least, this kind of alliance was considered a meritorious action on the part of the esquire concerned, for not only did he receive an annuity therefor, but ever afterwards when a payment was made on the annuity, the circumstances were given in full. "To Edmund Rose, valletus, to whom the King has given ten pounds per annum to be received at the Exchequer, for good service rendered to the King and because he has married Agnes Archer formerly damsel to Queen Philippa."[8] Similarly Roger Archer (called "esquier ma dame," and, in the grant, valet to Isabella, daughter of Edward III) married Alexandra de la Mote damsel to Isabella.[9] It is curious that in both these cases the maiden name of the wife is given in the Issue Rolls for years after the grant of the annuities.

In the other cases only the surname of the husband is given. These cases are: Walter Wyght and Margaret Wyght,[10] Thomas and Katherine Spigurnell,[11] John and Almicia de Beverle,[12] John and Stephanetta Olney,[13] Robert and Joan Louth,[14] Piers and Alice Preston,[15] Hugh and Agatha Lyngeyn[16] and John and Margaret Romsey.[17]

[1] Beltz. Mem. of Garter, p. 90 ff, Woodworth, Wilks, Lockhart, Hampshire III, 274. [2] Abstracts and Indexes—Duchy of Lancaster I, 157. [3] Dugdale I, 269, Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 333. [4] Manning's Surrey I. 85. [5] Baker's Northampton II, 252. [6] Pat. Roll 290, mem. 14. [7] Dugdale's Warwickshire, p. 86. [8] Issues, P. 210, P. 204; mem. 5, etc. [9] Pat. Roll 273, mem. 8. Issues, P. 213, mem. 22. [10] Issues, P. 221, mem. 11. [11] L. R., p. 172, C. R. 1357, p. 351, 404, 438. [12] L. R. p. 172, Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 29. [13] L. R., p. 172. Issues, P. 241, mem. 8. [14] L. R. p. 172, Pat. Roll 264, mem. 39. [15] Pat. Roll 1378, p. 125. [16] Issues, P. 272, mem. 13. [17] idem, P. 200, mem. 19, Hoare's Wilts, Hundred of Cawdon, p. 13.

The Careers of the Individual Esquires

In the preparation of this study, I have collected all the facts I could find about the esquires of 1368.[1] Since the essential facts about them have been discussed in the preceding pages, however, I shall present in detail the careers of only three or four typical esquires. Of the others, John de Herlyng, for many years usher of the King's chamber, received many grants from the King and held many offices; Thomas Cheyne,[2] keeper of the royal jewels, fought in the wars in France and received grants of lands and wardships; John de Romeseye acted at various times as royal messenger, and as royal treasurer at Calais; Walter Walssh, another usher of the King's chamber, received the custody of the possessions of an alien abbey, and the grant of a house and land; Hugh Wake made journeys on the King's service and received some grants; Roger Clebury and Piers de Cornewaill received a few grants; Robert de Ferrers had the grant of a manor; Helmyng Leget, for years receiver of the King's Chamber, had many grants of land and custodies; Robert de Corby had the grant of a manor; Collard Dabrichecourt had grants of manors and offices; Thomas Hauteyn received one custody and one grant of land in Ely; Hugh Cheyne had a few grants; the only Thomas Foxle I find trace of, who died in 30 Edward III, received some grants; Simond de Burgh is mentioned in many financial transactions of the time, and he was for some time treasurer of Calais; of John Tichemerssh, I find no mention, and of Robert la Souche very little; Esmon Rose was keeper of the King's horses; information about Laurence Hauberk is ambiguous since there seem to have been two or more men of that name; Griffith de la Chambre and John de Thorpe received minor grants; of Raulyn Erchedeakne I find no mention; Thomas Hertfordyngbury, Hugh Strelley, Hugh Lyngen, Nicholas Prage and Richard Torperle received various small grants; Richard de Wirle appears only as an esquire of John of Gaunt; about John Northrugge and Hanyn Narrett, I find very little; Simond de Bokenham was chief sergeant of the King's larder; and John Legge, who seems to have been really an esquire at arms, met his death in the Peasant's Revolt.

[1] A statement of the facts will be found deposited in the University of Chicago Library. [2] Cf. Froissart XX, 562.

Walter Whithors

Walter Whithors is mentioned in the records first in 1343 when he received an order granting him his wages for life, and the custody of the River Fosse for life.[1] In 1346 he was granted two marriages, in 1347, five marks a year, the tronagership of Lenn, and the constableship of Conisborough Castle.[2] In 1348 the King granted Whithors all the tenements and rents in the city of London which were in the King's hands by reason of the forfeiture of a certain William de Mordon.[3] In the same year he was given the custody of the smaller piece of the seal for recognizances of debts in the city of York.[4] In 1349 he received a grant of forfeited houses in the county of York,[5] and likewise a mill and more lands forfeited by William de Mordon.[6] Furthermore he was given in the same year the right to dispose of some of these latter lands.[7] In 1349 further he was granted the stewardship of the forest of Galtres, and the roots of all trees cut down in that forest.[8] In 1352 the office of tronage of the wools at Lenne was granted to his former deputy, at the request of Walter Whithors who surrendered a grant of that office.[9] Next year he was given an annuity of twenty marks, and also the right to exercise the office of recognizances of debts by deputy, "because he stays continually in the King's service, at his side."[10] In the same year he was granted the custody of the forest of Lynton, adjacent to Galtres.[11]

In 1360 Whithors was granted certain houses in York formerly belonging to Richard de Snaweshull,[12] and also the custody of the lands and tenements formerly belonging to Nicholas de Litton, during the minority of the heir.[13] In 1361 he was given a messuage and shop formerly owned by Walter Ragoun in London and worth forty shillings yearly.[14] From a document of the same year we learn something about the marriage of his daughter. By this document Stephen Wydeslade, cousin and heir of Thomas Branche, acknowledged a debt of two hundred pounds to Whithors, which is to be paid in the form of an annuity of twelve marks to Mary, daughter of Whithors and widow of Thomas Branche. She is to have further as dower certain manors in Norfolk and Surrey. Her husband had

[1] C. R., p. 203. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll, pp. 37, 69, 234, 451, 545. [3] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 48. [4] idem, p. 143. [5] idem, p. 261. [6] idem, p. 333. [7] idem, p. 440. [8] idem, pp. 368, 433—apparently with deputy, for in Cal. Pat. Roll 1352, p. 214, a lieutenant is mentioned. [9] idem, pp. 267, 293. [10] idem, pp. 380, 498. [11] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 417. [12] Pat. Roll 256, mem. 5. [13] idem, mem. 13. [14] idem 261, mem. 12.

been a ward of her father's and had died a minor.[1] In 1363 Whithors was pardoned the payment of all moneys which he had drawn in advance from the wardrobe.[2] Likewise in the same year he had a grant of the marriage of the son and heir of John Colvyll, Chivaler, defunct.[3] In 1363 he received a grant of the custody of the Palace of Westminster and the prison of the Fleet,[4] and of the custody of all lands and tenements formerly the property of William Bruyn, defunct.[5] In 1365 Whithors had a grant of the manour of Naburn with pertinences in York, formerly the property of a felon.[6]

In 1370 he was granted free warren in Brenchesham, Surrey.[7] And in the same year and nearly until his death, he had an annuity of forty marks a year as usher or doorkeeper of the King's free chapel of Windsor. For this office also he received twelve pence a day "because that the same Lord the King charged the same Walter to carry a wand in the presence of the said Lord the King, before the college" when the King personally should be there, "and that the same Walter might be able more easily to support that charge."[8] In that year likewise he was sent to York to borrow money from divers abbots, priors and others for the King's use.[9] In 1373 he and Isabella his wife acquired by a devious series of transfers a messuage of land with reversion to their son Walter.[10] In 1377 Gerard Brocas acknowledged a debt of 160 m. to Walter Whithors.[11] In 1377 he was granted the lands and tenements of Simon Raunville, defunct, and the marriage of his heiress to Ralph, son of Walter Whithors. In 1383 he was still exercising the office of custodian of the smaller piece of the seal for York by deputy.[12] Three years later the King at his supplication granted his annuity of forty marks to another.[13] In 1387 he was apparently dead, for the King granted to another the office of usher of St. George's Chapel, and the house which he had occupied.[14]

According to Dugdale, Walter Whithors married Mabel, daughter and coheir of Philip Neweham (or Newnham) of Neunham Padox in Warwick. Their son and heir was Sir Ralph Whitehorse Kt.[15]

[1] C. R., p. 134. [2] Pat. Roll 262, mem. 15. [3] idem 262, mem. 18. [4] idem 265, mem. 15. [5] idem, mem. 17. [6] idem 270, mem. 34. [7] Cal. Rot. Chart, p. 187. [8] Devon's Issues, p. 101. [9] idem, p. 111. [10] Pat. Roll 287, mem. 4. [11] C. R. 216, mem. 8 dorso. [12] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 242. [13] idem, p. 146. [14] idem, p. 297. [15] Warwickshire, p. 86.

John de Beverle

John de Beverle is particularly interesting to us because in 1376 he was joined with Chaucer as surety for William de Beauchamp when the latter received the custody of the castle and county of Pembroke.[1] The first mention of him in the public records occurs in 36 Edward III when he was granted the custody of all the lands and tenements of James de Pabenham, Knight, defunct, during the minority of the heir,[2] and when he and Amicia de Bockeshill his wife were granted twenty pounds yearly by the king.[3] In the next year he was granted the office of constable of the castle of Limerick and certain water rights at the same place.[4] In 38 Edward III John de Beverle, who was holding the manor of Pencrich, Staffordshire, from the king in capite, having acquired it from John, son and heir of Hugo Blount, was pardoned the transgression committed in entering upon it. In the same year he was granted the right to hold a fair at Pencrych.[5] In 39 Edward III, he received a grant of two tenements in the parish of St. Michael atte Corne, London,[6] at the customary rent; he established a chantry[7]; and received a grant of the constableship of the castle of Leeds for life, with wages 100s. therefore.[8] In 39-40 Edward III, he was granted the right of free warren in Mendlesden,[9] Hertfordshire. In 39 Edward III, he was granted the manor of Mendlesden[10] and two dolia of Gascon wine yearly.[11] In 40 Edward III, the king granted his mother, Matilda, a number of tenements and shops in London.[12] He himself was in that year granted the manor of Bukenhull for life, with reversion to his heirs,[13] and the custody of the manor of Melton in Kent during the minority of the heir.[14] He seems also in that year to have sold to the Count of Arundell and others his manor of Pencrych.[15]

In 41 Edward III John de Beverle was granted the manor of Bofford in Oxford.[16] In the next year he was granted the right to hunt in the parks and forests of the king, with this prologue: "Redeuntes ad memoriam obsequia et servicia placida que dilectus armiger noster Johannes de Beverlee nobis non absque periculis

[1] L. R., p. 213. [2] Pat. Roll 265, mem. 17. [3] idem 266. mem. 29. [4] idem 267, mem. 6, 8. [5] Cal. Rot. Chart, p. 185. [6] Cal. Rot. Pat. Tur. Lon., p. 179 b. [7] Inq. Ad. Quod Damnum, p. 335. [8] Cal. Rot. Pat. Tur. Lon., p. 180. [9] Cal. Rot. Chart, p. 185. [10] Pat. Roll 272, mem. 4. [11] idem 271, mem. 21. [12] idem 274, mem. 2. [13] idem 273, mem. 37. [14] idem 274, mem. 43. [15] idem 273, mem. 13. [16] idem 276, mem. 6.

et rerum despendiis a longo tempore impendit'' etc.[1] In 43 Edward III permission was given to Walter Bygod, miles, to grant at farm to John de Beverle the manors of Alfreston (Essex) and Marham (Norfolk) at a rent of £ 200 to Walter Bygod.[2] In that year also a grant by Ingelram de Courcy to John de Beverle of the manor of Tremworth in Kent was confirmed by the king.[3] Finally he was granted the parkership of Eltham forest for life with pay of three pence per day.[4] He was at this time drawing an annuity of £ 40, 8s. 9d. for life and he was also paid (in this year, 1370) £ 107, 15s. 5d. for his wages and those of his men at arms and archers in the war.[5] In 1371 he was paid 100m.[6]

In 44 Edward III the king granted John de Beverle the manor of Rofford in Oxfordshire,[7] and the custody of the lands of John de Kaynes, defunct, during the minority of his heir.[8] In 46 Edward III the king granted him the custody of all the lands of Walter Bygod, chivaler, in Essex and Norfolk, with marriage of the heir.[9] He was also in that year granted an annuity of 33s. 4d. and the manor of Rodbaston in Staffordshire.[10] The next year, John de Beverle received a grant of the reversion to two parts of the manor of Godyngdon in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and also of the manor of Bokenhull in Oxfordshire.[11] He was at that time paying ten pounds yearly for the farm of the manor of Godingdon.[12] In 48 Edward III he received a grant of the goods and chattels of Thomas de la Bere, an outlaw,[13] and also of all the trees cut down in Eltham forest.[14] Finally he had a grant of the manor of Bikenhull (sic).[15] In 49 Edward III he was granted certain tenements and rents in London.[16] In 50 Edward III, he and his wife acquired the manor of Pencrych (Stafford) from Thomas, son of Hugo Blount, Knight,[17] and he was granted custody of the lands of John Ferrers, Knight, with marriage of the heir.[18] In 1377 he was one of the witnesses to Edward III's will.[19] In 1377 he testified against Alice Perrers before Parliament. He said that she took care not to say anything about the matter under

[1] Pat. Roll 278, mem. 8. [2] idem 279, mem. 12. [3] idem 280, mem. 28. [4] idem 279; mem. 28. [5] Devon's Issues 1370, pp. 35, 81. [6] Rymer, old ed. VII, 178. [7] Cal. Rot. Pat. Turr. Lon., p. 186. Error for Bofford? [8] Pat. Roll 281, mem. 2. [9] idem 287, mem. 5. [10] idem 287, mem. 18, 34. [11] idem 289, mem. 17. [12] Cal. Rot. Pat. Turr. Lon., p. 188. [13] Pat. Roll 290, mem. 8. [14] idem 290, mem. 10. [15] idem 290, mem. 30. [16] idem 292, mem. 28. [17] C. R., mem. 1. [18] Pat. Roll 295, mem. 23. [19] Test Vet., p. 12.

dispute before him. (Ele soi gardst bien de lui qu'ele ne parla rien en sa presence.)[1]

In 1377 we find an acknowledgement of one hundred marks which John de Beverle had lent to the king for the expeditions over sea,[2] and in this year he is said to have been armour-bearer to the king[3] (Edward III). In 1 Richard II, he acquired a rent of forty shillings from lands and tenements in Buckenhull.[4] In 1378 certain men were imprisoned for a debt of one hundred pounds to John de Beverle and Joan de Bokkyng,[5] and in that year he paid twenty pounds for leave to alienate certain property of six marks rent which he held from the king. In 1378 he was retained to serve Richard II and confirmed in his possession of the office of parker of Eltham parks, an annuity of ten pounds and the fee farm rent of eighty-one pounds for the manor of Hedyngdom.[6] In 1380 his office of constable of the castle of Leeds, the profits of the mills there and the custody of the park there, were exchanged for ten pounds to be deducted yearly from his rent of twenty pounds paid to the king for the manor of Tremworth.[7]

In 1381 John de Beverle was dead leaving seven manors and other property.[8] In 17 Richard II his wife, Amicia, had become the wife of Robert Bardolf, miles.[9]

In the index to his Froissart, Kervyn de Lettenhoeve describes John de Beverle as "moult grant baron d'Angleterre' and refers to a list of chevaliers who were going to Portugal in 1384 with the master of the order of St. James.[10] This was certainly not our John de Beverle because the latter was dead in 1381.

Geffrey Stucle

The first mention I find of Geffrey Stucle is in 1347 when he had a grant of the bailiwick of Cork in Ireland made at the request of Henry, Earl of Lancaster.[11] This grant was confirmed by one of 32 Edward III—an inspeximus and confirmation of letters patent of Maurice, Count Dessemond, according to which Maurice granted the bailiwick of Cork to Geffrey Styeucle at the request of Lionel, Count of Ulster. According to this last document Stucle had the office with all its fees and privileges and was to pay for it a rose

[1] Rot. Parl., p. 14. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 29. [3] Dunkin's Oxfordshire I, 197. [4] Ms. Cal. C. R., p. 14. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 130. [6] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 143. [7] idem, p. 506. [8] Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 29. [9] C. R. 235, mem. 35. [10] Cf. Rymer old ed. VII, 451. [11] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 367.

yearly at the feast of St. John the Baptist.[1] In 1348 also a statement is made that Stucle is going to Brittany on the king's service.

In 29 Edward III Stucle appears under entirely different circumstances: he is then "vallettus" of the Countess of Ulster and is paid forty shillings and sixty shillings for attending to certain business of the countess.[2] Again he is mentioned as "vallettus" of the Countess of Ulster, staying in London on her affairs, and paid sixty shillings therefor.[3] In 31 Edward III he had a grant—as "vallettus" of the king's household—of ten marks per annum, "for good services to the king," etc.[4] Evidently then Stucle came into the king's household, just as Chaucer did, from the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, and it is to be noted that he received an annuity within a year or a little more, possibly as soon as he shifted to the king's service. In the same year he was sent on a mission of the king's and paid 26s. 8d.[5] In 33 Edward III he was sent on the king's secret business to Normandy and paid £16,13s.4d. for his wages.[6] He was paid ten pounds more in the same year for a mission of the king's—possibly the same as the foregoing.[7] In 35 Edward III he was sent on the king's business to Normandy and paid ten pounds for his wages.[8] Likewise in the same year he was paid twenty pounds for his wages in going to France and Normandy in the diplomatic service of the king—possibly the same as the foregoing.[9] In 36 Edward III he was paid ten pounds for going on another journey[10] and £6,13s.4d. for a journey on the king's business to Britanny.[11] In the same year he was paid sixty shillings for his robe.[12] In 37 Edward III he was sent to Jersey in the company of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster,[13] and his annuity was increased to twenty marks.[14]

In 38 Edward III Stucle was granted, at his own request, custody of all lands and tenements which were formerly the property of Richard de la Rynere, defunct, during the minority of the heir.[15] In 39 Edward III he went on a diplomatic mission to the duke of Britanny, and was paid £26,13s.4d. therefor.[16] In 40 Edward III he was granted one tenement and two shops in the parish of St. Michael over Cornhill, London.[17] In 41 Edward III

[1] Pat. Roll 255, mem. 29. [2] Issues, P. 212, mem. 22, 27. [3] idem, P. 294, (214?) mem. 23. [4] Issues, P. 217, mem. 14. [5] idem, mem. 18. [6] idem, P. 223, mem. 17. [7] idem, P. 222, mem. 20. [8] idem A 169, mem. 30. [9] idem A 169, mem. 38. [10] Issues, P. 228, mem. 2. [11] idem, P. 229, mem. 25. [12] idem. [13] idem, P. 232, mem. 20. [14] Pat. Roll 267, mem. 21. [15] idem 269, mem. 43. [16] Issues, P. 239, mem. 31. [17] Pat. Roll 273, mem. 35.

he was paid forty pounds for a mission to Spain.[1] In 42 Edward III he was paid forty pounds for a journey to the Prince of Aquitain.[2] In 1370 he was given ten marks in addition to his wages for the five voyages which he had made to Calais for the king.[3] In that year also he was sent on secret business of the king to Nottingham.[4]

In 47 Edward III, Stucle was sent to Flanders with certain letters of privy seal directed to various bannerets and knights of the king's retinue who were staying in Germany, directing them to prepare themselves to go with John, duke of Lancaster, to France on the king's business.[5] For this he was paid £13,6s.8d. and he received ten pounds more for a journey to Flanders with letters directed to Simon, Archbishop of Canterbury.[6] In 49 Edward III he was sent to Brugges to report to the council the results of the conference between the ambassadors of the king and the king of France for a treaty of peace.[7] In the same year he was granted custody of all the lands and tenements formerly belonging to John Dakeneye, chivaler, defunct, with marriage of the heir.[8] In 50 Edward III he was paid ten pounds for transacting certain arduous business pertaining to the king in Flanders.[9] In 1 Richard II, Stucle was sent to Leycester with a letter of private seal directed to John, King of Castile and Leon, Duke of Lancaster, certifying to the duke the death of the countess of March and excusing the count of March on that account from his journey to the north.[10] In the same year he was sent to the north with a letter directed to John of Lancaster ordering the latter to come to London to the king's council.[11] In 2 Richard II he was paid a hundred shillings for a journey to various parts of England to get money for a royal expedition.[12] In 1378 his grant of an annuity—here stated to be twenty pounds—was confirmed and he was retained in the king's service.[13] In 10 Richard II it is stated that Richard de la Panetrie had married his widow; evidently he had not been dead long for the king paid to his widow £37,6s.8d. due to him.[14]

[1] Issues, P. 248, mem. not numbered. [2] Issues, P. 249, mem. 4. [3] Devon's Issues, p. 409. [4] idem. [5] Issues, P. 262, mem. 9. [6] idem 264, mem. not numbered. [7] idem, P. 271, mem. 17. [8] Pat. Roll 293, mem. 19. [9] Issues, P. 273, mem. 20. [10] idem 295, mem. 11. [11] idem 295, mem. 17. [12] idem, P. 298, mem. 23. [13] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 181. [14] Issues, P. 315, mem. 11.

Georg Felbrigg

Mention of George Felbrig first occurs in 34 Edward III when he was granted an annuity of twenty marks.[1] In 37 Edward III George Felbrigg and William Elys were granted the farm of all the customs except those of wool and wool-fells in the town of Magne Jernemuth for one year.[2] They seem to have held this farm for a number of years, certainly in 40 and 41 Edward III, by yearly grants and at a rent of twenty-two pounds per annum.[3] In 1370 he was paid £31, 11s. 10 d. for the expenses of himself his men at arms, and archers in the war.[3a] In 44 Edward III he was receiving an annuity of twenty pounds,[4] and in the same year he had a grant at farm of the hundred of Northerpyngham, and Southerpyngham, paying fifty pounds yearly therefor.[5] In 47 Edward III he was granted custody of the priory of Tostes at a farm of sixty-three pounds yearly.[6] In 48 Edward III the bailiff of fees, etc., in Norfolk and Suffolk was ordered by the Duke of Lancaster to deliver the lands and tenements late belonging to Elizabeth, Dame de Aspall, to George de Felbrigge who had married Margaret, daughter of the said Elizabeth.[7] In 49 Edward III he was granted a messuage with pertinences in Grippewic.[8] In 50 Edward III he had a grant of the "balliva" of the hundred of Rockeford in Essex, and also of the custody of Haddele Castle.[9] In 51 Edward III he was sent on secret business of the King to John, duke of Brittany, in Flanders, and paid £13, 6s. 8d. for his wages for the journey.[10]

In 1377 he is said to have been one of the jury that found Alice Perrers guilty of maintenance[11]; certainly he witnessed against her before Parliament.[12] In 2 Richard II he was sent on secret business of the King with John de Burle and others to Milan; for the voyage he received £23, 6s. 8d.[13] In 4 Richard II he was sent to the King of the Romans and of Bohemia on secret business connected with the marriage of the King, and paid £66, 13s. 4d. for the journey.[14] In 1382 he and John Herlyng acquired a messuage and sixty acres of land.[15] In 5 Richard II he was paid for a certain

[1] Pat. Roll 261, mem. 2. [2] idem 268, mem. 49. [3] Fine Roll 167, mem, 10, 168, mem. 16, [3a] Devon p. 440. [4] Devon's Issues, p. 66. [5] Fine Roll 171, mem. 26. [6] idem 174, mem. 16. [7] Abstracts and Indexes (Long Room—Rec. Off.) I, 157 dorso. [8] Pat. Roll 293, mem. 3. [9] Abb. Rot. Orig. II. 310. [10] Issues, P. 274, mem. 11. [11] Blomefield's Norfolk VIII, 107 ff. [12] Rot. Parl. p. 14. [13] Issues, P. 298, mem. 20. [14] Issues, P. 303, mem. 2. [15] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 121.

voyage to Germany £75, 6s. 8d. and for a voyage on king's secret business to Flanders, ten pounds.[1] In 1384 he was granted for life the ten pounds yearly due from him from the issues of the Castle of Colchester. In this document his services as King's messenger beyond the seas are expressly mentioned.[2] He seems to have had custody of the castle of Colchester, for when later in 1384 the King granted it to Robert de Veer, he gave instead forty pounds yearly to George Felbrigg.[3] In 7, 8 Richard II he was granted free warren for certain estates in Suffolk.[4] In 1385 the King granted to George Felbrig, whom the King on his entry into Scotland had advanced to the rank of Knight, forty pounds yearly to enable him to support his estate more honorably.[5] He had with him when he was in the King's expedition to Scotland eight esquires and bowmen.[6]

In 11 Richard II George de Felbrugg was sent to the Duke of Gueldres at Middleburgh to receive his homage on the part of the King; for his expenses on the journey he was paid thirty pounds.[7] In 1389-92 he was mentioned frequently in the Patent Rolls as Justice of the Peace in Suffolk.[8] In 14 Richard II he was paid forty pounds for a journey to the King of the Romans, and in 15 Richard II a hundred pounds for the same journey.[9] In 1399 nine grants made by Richard II to him, were confirmed by Henry IV.[10] In 1401 a George Felbrig married Anne, late the wife of Robert Charles, Knight.[11]

Blomefield gives the following additional information about Felbrig. In 7 Richard II he and Margery his wife held the manors of Wortham and Ingham in Suffolk. About the same time Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, granted to him and Roger Mareschall, esquire, the manor and park of Standon in Hertfordshire, at farm. He was one of the King's protectors in the latter's tenth year, and in 15 Richard II, he was one of the Lieutenants in the court of chivalry to try the case of Lords Morley and Lovell. His will was dated 3 February 1400.[12]

[1] Issues, P. 304, mem. 19, P. 305, mem. 13. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 367. [3] idem, pp. 440, 442. [4] Cal. Rot. Chart., p. 190. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 18. [6] Issues, P. 312, mem. 17. [7] idem, P. 316, mem. 2. [8] Cal. Pat. Roll index. [9] Issues, P. 323, mem. 5, P. 324, mem. 5. [10] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 77. [11] idem, p. 539. [12] Blomefield, VIII, pp. 107 ff.

THE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

The office of Justice of the Peace developed in England in the fourteenth century. The main outlines of its growth can be indicated by the statement of a few significant facts. In 1327 it was enacted that "good and lawful men" be assigned to keep the peace. In 1330 they were given power to return indictments. In 1360 one lord and with him three or four of the most worthy of the county, with some learned in the law, were given power to arrest malefactors, to receive indictments against them, and to hear and determine at the King's suit all manner of felonies and trespasses done in the county. In 1362 it was directed by statute that the justices should hold sessions four times a year, and, in 1388, that they should be paid four shillings a day during the sessions.[1] In 13 Richard II it was enacted that the justices should be "the most efficient Knights, esquires and gentlemen of the law" of the county.[2]

The justices of a given county were derived from three classes.[3]

(a) those appointed by being named in the schedule. (The Lord Chancellor made the appointment, usually relying upon the Lord Lieutenant, or the custos rotulorum, of the county.)

(b) virtute officii—i. e. the Lord Chancellor, Lord President of the Privy Council, Lord Privy Seal, Justices of the Supreme Court, etc.

(c) holders of minor judicial offices, county judges, etc.

Of those named in the list of Justices of the Peace for Kent in 1386 at least four fall under class (b); Robert Tresilian, Robert Bealknap, David Hannemere, and Walter Clopton were at that time Justices in the King's courts and their names occur (evidently ex officio) in the lists of justices for many of the counties of England. Since they very likely never sat with the Justices of the Peace in Kent, they may, for our purposes, be disregarded.

We cannot be sure that Chaucer ever actually sat on this commission or that he knew personally any one of his fellow justices. Consequently there is no intrinsic interest in a study of their in-

[1] Summarized from Maitland's Constitutional History and G. E. Howard. Neb. U. Studies, pp. 44, 53. [2] Though enacted after Chaucer's time as justice, this indicates very nearly a contemporary attitude toward the office. [3] Encyclopedia of Laws of England, vol. 7, p. 587.

dividual careers and personalities. But a few notes about them will give us some impression of the type of men with whom Chaucer was associating and the importance of his social position.

In the fourteenth century the name of the Constable of Dover and Warden of the Cinque Ports always heads the list of justices in Kent. The holder of that office in 1387 was SIMON DE BURLEY, one of the most influential men in Richard II's court. This man was not of noble birth. Barnes (quoted by Kervyn de Lettenhoeve)[1] says that Walter Burley was so renowned for his learning at Oxford that he became the almoner of the queen (Philippa (?)) and the tutor of the prince of Wales. One of his relatives, Simon de Burley, was included among the group of young people brought up with the prince, and soon he became the latter's intimate friend, and afterwards one of the tutors of his son, Richard II. He enjoyed the greatest favour under Richard II, and belonged to the group of the King's friends, Robert de Vere, Michael de la Pole and Nicholas Brembre. He had been connected always with the family of Richard II (a fact illustrated by his being named by Joan, mother of Richard II, one of the executors of her will, 1385).[2] In 1377 Richard II confirmed to him—"the King's father's Knight"— a grant of a hundred pounds yearly made by the King's father and the custody of Kerwerdyn castle.[3] In the same year he granted de Burley the office of constable of Windsor Castle for life, the abbot of Feecampe's manor of Sloghtre,[4] rent free, during the war, and the office of master of the falcons.[5] In 1378 he confirmed to de Burley the custody of the manor of Chiltenham (Gloucester) and the fee simple of the castle and lordship of Lanstephan.[6] In 1382 Richard granted him the office of under-chamberlain of the King's household for life, and appointed him surveyor of the lands in South Wales in the King's hands during the minority of the heir of Edmond Mortimer.[7] In 1384 the King granted him for life the constableship of Dover Castle and the wardenship of the Cinque Ports, and three hundred pounds yearly therefor (and for the maintenance of himself, chaplains, etc.) with provision that he exercise the office himself.[8] In 1388 he was attainted of treason with the other favourites of the King and executed. It is reported that people in Kent rose in rebellion to

[1] Froissart XX, 487. [2] Test. Vet., p. 15. [3] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 223. [4] idem, pp. 78, 21, 223. [5] idem, p. 78. [6] idem, p. 119, 256. [7] idem, p. 164. [8] idem, p. 367.

demonstrate their loyalty to him. At his death Michael de la Pole, William Wingfield and he possessed together extensive lands, and he himself had some seven manors in Kent.[1]

The JOHN DE COBEHAM whose name follows that of de Burley in the list, was one of the most eminent barons of his day. I shall merely outline a few of the most important features in his career. He came of one of the oldest families in Kent.[2] His father had been at various times admiral of the King's fleet in the west, justice in Kent, and constable of Rochester. His mother was Joan, daughter of John, lord Beauchamp of Stoke. In 40, 41 Edward III John de Cobeham served in the wars in France; in 41 Edward III he was ambassador to Rome. In 1 Richard II he was a member of the King's council, served later in France with three Knights, 105 esquires and 110 men at arms, and was made a banneret. In 10 Richard II he was one of the thirteen lord governours of the realm, appointed to oversee the government of the King. From 1377 on he was on many commissions to treat for peace with foreign powers. In 1387 he was with the five lords appellant at Waltham Cross (evidently then he was of the party of Gloucester and Arundel). He was Member of Parliament from Kent in 1390, 1394 and 1398. In 1392 he was lieutenant to the constable of England, and in the same year he was given a cup in the Earl of Arundel's will.[3] With the downfall of Gloucester he fell out of favour. He died in 1409, leaving extensive possessions (forty-three items in all) in London, Wiltshire, Kent and Surrey. He married Margaret, daughter of Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire.[4]

JOHN CLINTON came of a prominent Kentish family. He was son of John de Clinton of Maxtoke and Ida d'Odingsel.[5] He was in the French and Scottish campaigns, was appointed on commissions and was at one time lieutenant of John Devereux, warden of the Cinque Ports. He died in 1396, leaving extensive lands in Kent (twenty-six items in all).[6] He married Margery Corbet, of a good Kentish family.

JOHN DEVEREUX was son of William Devereux. Edward III attached him to the person of his grandson (Richard II?) and gave

[1] Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 111, 119. [2] Ireland's Kent V, 240 ff. [3] Test. Vet., p. 133. [4] On Cobeham cf. Nicolas Hist. Peerage, and Kent. Arch. Soc. II, p. 71. [5] Froissart XXI, pp. 17 ff. [6] Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 228.

him two hundred marks as a pension.[1] He was in Spain with the Black Prince. In 1377 he was appointed one of the King's council,[2] in 1378 constable of Leeds Castle for life, and in 1380 Captain of the city of Calais.[3] He was on many commissions to treat of peace with France and Flanders[4] and from 1384 on he was frequently summoned to Parliament. In 1386 he was one of the council of eleven appointed to govern England. From 1386 to 1390 (and perhaps longer) he was steward of the King's household.[5] In 1387 he was with the lords appellant at Waltham Cross.[6] In 1387 he succeeded Simon de Burley as Constable of Dover and Warden of the Cinque Ports.[7] He died in 1394, a Knight of the Garter[8] and the possessor, in right of his wife, of the manor of Penshurst, Kent. His only other property seems to have been the manor of Donyngton in Buckinghamshire.[9]

Thomas Culpeper came from a great Kentish family which at one time could boast of having twelve members bearing the order of Knighthood.[10] A Thomas Culpeper was Member of Parliament for Kent in 1361 and in other later years.

Thomas Fogg was Member of Parliament for Kent in 1378, 1380, 1383, 1384, 1388. He held lands by Knight's service of the Lord of Ponynges, and came, through right of his wife, into part of the property of Warresins de Valoynes. In 1377 he was constable of the castle of Calais.[11] He was prominent in the wars of the time, especially in naval action. In 1386 he went to Spain with John of Gaunt.[12] In 1405 he died.[13]

William Rikhill was a justice of the King's bench. He may have been in the list for that reason, or perhaps because he was an inhabitant of Kent. At any rate he came of a landed family in Kent.[14] He died in Henry IV's reign.

John Fremingham, son of Sir Ralph Fremingham of Lose, was derived from a prominent Kentish family.[15] He himself is called "chivaler;" was sheriff of Kent in 1378 and 1393, and a Member of Parliament in 1377, 1381 and 1399. He was executor of the will of William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury. He died

[1] Froissart XXI, p. 94. Statham Hist. of Dover, p. 380. [2] Rymer old ed. VII, 161. [3] idem, p. 259. [4] idem, 308, 338, 248. [5] Rymer old ed. VII, 495, 675. [6] Rot. Parl. III, 229. [7] Ireland's Kent I, 710. [8] Beltz, p. 323. [9] Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 174. [10] Kent. Arch. XXI, 212. [11] Rymer IV, 2. [12] Rymer old ed. VII, 499. [13] Kent. Arch. XVIII, p. 360. [14] Ireland's Kent, IV, 416. [15] idem, III, 111. Kent Arch. XXI, 214, XXIII, 57.

12 Henry IV, possessing the manor and advowson of the church of Otham, and Read Court.

James de Pekham was of another old Kentish family which can be traced as far back as Richard I.[1] His great grandfather possessed the manor of Pekham in Hadlow (temp. Edward I) and the estates had been increased since that time. James Pekham was sheriff of Kent in 1377 and 1380 and a member of Parliament in 1372, 1377, 1383, 1388.

William Topclyf was apparently the only man in the list (except Chaucer) who did not come from a landed Kentish family. He was, however, in 1382 and doubtless later, land steward to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He held a manor in Kent, whether as steward of the Archbishop or of his own right, I have not been able to find out.[2]

Thomas Brokhill, of Saltwood, chivaler, derived from a good Kentish family, was Sheriff in 1382, 1383, 1385, 1395, 1397, 1399, and 1402. He died in 1437-38, leaving no male heirs.[3]

William Brenchesley was lord of the manor of Benenden, near Dartford, and a justice of the Common Pleas (in Henry IV's time).[4]

[1] Ireland's Kent III, 529. Kent Arch. Soc. XXI, 214, XXVIII, 210. [2] Kent Arch. IV, 125. [3] Ireland's Kent II, 218. Kent Arch. XXI, 215, XVIII, 422, 3. [4] Kent Arch. V, 27.

THE CUSTOMS.[1]

The duties of the collectors of customs were to ensure payment on all wools and leather shipped from their port, to have the wool or leather weighed at the wool-beam and each bale tested and sealed with the Government stamp or "coket" seal. The collectors, of whom there were two in every important port, were clerical officers rather than coast guards—their most arduous duty the preparing and balancing of the accounts which had to be written by their own hands. Their salary was twenty pounds a year each. The controller, who was intended as a check on the collectors, prepared and presented an independent account to the Exchequer. He seems to have had no fixed salary, but the collectors were empowered to pay the controller's salary out of the takings.[2] The sums thus paid, were however, mostly nominal, (in Chaucer's case ten pounds a year) and it is evident that both collectors and controllers were allowed to levy fees.

The collectors of the Port of London during Chaucer's service as controller were:

1374 John de Bernes and Nicholas Brembre.
1375 Brembre and William de Walworth.
1376 John Warde and Robert Girdelere.
1377 Warde and Richard Northbury.
1378-1384 Brembre and John Philipot.
1384-1386 Brembre and John Organ.

These were in every case prominent citizens and merchants of London, and after 1377, they were members of a clique especially friendly to the King, and inimical to John of Gaunt. To gain the right conception of their relations, one must learn something about London politics. I shall follow Trevelyan's account[3] of the factional struggles in the city, which from the documents which he has published and from such evidence as that afforded by the Rolls of Parliament, is unquestionably the correct one. The aldermen of London were the representatives of the companies (the associations of merchants of different sorts), each company choosing a given

[1] Summarized from Hubert Hall: History of the Customs Revenue. [2] Atton & Holland: the King's Customs. [3] Age of Wyclif, pp. 278 ff.

number according to its influence and wealth. Further in 1376 a method of electing the mayor and the sheriffs, was introduced, which consisted in a vote by companies. Now the most powerful of these companies was the Grocers' which at this time had sixteen aldermen—many more than its nearest competitor. Allied with this company were the other companies of merchants dealing in provisions, especially the Fishmongers. The chief opponents of this group were the companies of clothing merchants, the mercers, drapers, cordwainers, etc. The Grocers' Company and its allies stood for the established order of things because they were faring well under it. The Mercers and Drapers were rebellious and ready to take any opportunity to eject their rivals from power.

At this time (1376) John of Gaunt's clique in the court, especially Lord Latimer and Richard Lyons, had aroused the enmity of the Londoners because of their irregular and "grafting" financial operations.[1] The Londoners paraded the streets in demonstration against John of Gaunt. The latter demanded revenge and gained the deposition of the mayor, Adam Staple. The Londoners rallied and elected Nicholas Brembre mayor.[2] Brembre and his allies defended the Londoners vigorously before Parliament. Naturally then John of Gaunt felt a still greater hatred of Brembre and his party and was willing to act as patron to their opponents. The latter in turn, eager to gain any aid they could in their struggles, willingly accepted John of Gaunt as a friend. This, as clearly as I can make out, is the train of circumstances which brought about an unquestioned condition: John of Gaunt's hatred of London and especially of Brembre and his party, and his patronage of John of Northampton, the chief representative of the clothiers. Brembre's chief political allies were Sir William Walworth, Sir John Philipot and Nicholas Exton. These men were very definitely patronised by Richard II in opposition to John Northampton, Richard Northbury and John More.

During Chaucer's tenure of the office of controller only one certain adherent of the Northampton faction acted as collector—Richard Northbury, who was dropped from the office almost as soon as Richard II came to the throne. The other men with whom Chaucer had to deal were the very leaders of the royal faction. Further they were the most eminent merchants of their time. In the

[1] Trevelyan, p. 10. [2] idem, p. 49. [3] See Robert Girdelere, p. 46.

first half of the fourteenth century the king had been forced to rely upon foreign, especially Italian, merchants for financial aids, loans, etc., since no group of Englishmen could control sufficient money to aid him in an emergency.[1] But in the second half he had at his hand a group of London merchants, powerful enough to meet the sudden financial needs of government. Moreover they were picturesque figures—Sir William Walworth striking down Wat Tyler in the presence of the peasant-host, Sir John Philipot fitting out a fleet at his own expense, scouring the channel and finally bringing the dreaded pirate Mercer in triumph to London.

John de Bernes, Collector in 1374, was, in 1360, Sheriff, in 1363 and 1370 Alderman, of London, and in 45, 46, Edward III, Mayor.[2] In 1370 he lent the King £100, in 1363 he was apparently employed in buying for the king's household.[3] He was dead by 1378, and I have not found out anything more about him.

Nicholas Brembre, Collector 1374, 1375, 1378-1386. See account in D. N. B. Brembre was mayor in 1377, 1383-4-5. He was the political leader of the group of King Richard's friends in London. Of his public career I shall not treat since that is sufficiently covered elsewhere. To illustrate his financial dealings, the following abstracts of documents are important. In September 1377, the King borrowed £10,000 of Brembre, Wallworth, Philipot and John Haddele (grocer, later Mayor of London), and certain other merchants, for whom these were attorneys, pledging the crown jewels.[4] In May 1378 this sum was repaid. In 1378, Hugh de Calvylegh, captain of Calais, Nicholas Brembre and John Philipot, in the service of the war, agreed to pay to William von de Voorde of Bruges, the sum of £2,166, 13s. 4d. as directed by the council, delivered their bond to the King's clerk, and a tally of that amount was placed in the hands of William de Wallworth.[5] In 1382 the King granted Brembre in discharge of 2,000m. lent by him to the King to discharge a debt to Sir Bretrucat de Lebret, half a mark from the subsidy of each sack of wool and wool-fells passing out of the ports of London and Boston, with custody of one part of the coket seal of the latter port, until the loan should be fully paid.[6] In 1380 Brembre, Philipot and Walworth were appointed

[1] W. D. Chester, Chronicles of the Customs Department, pp. 13 ff. [2] Riley Memorials, pp. 305, 313, 345. Gregory's Chronicle (Camden Soc.) p. 88. [3] Devon's Issues, p. 170. Rymer III, 696. [4] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 25. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 280. [6] idem, p. 164.

on a commission to investigate the finances of the realm—together with the Archbishop of York, Earl of Arundel, etc. This group of men is, indeed, constantly mentioned together; throughout such documents as the Patent Rolls, where matters of national finance are under consideration, Brembre, Philipot and Walworth, or perhaps two of them, are sure to be mentioned.[1]

In the latter part of his career complaints were sent to Parliament against him and Exton, by the Mercers, Cordwainers, Founders, Sadlers, Painters, Armourers, Pinners, Embroiderers, Spurriors and Blacksmiths—obviously the trades belonging to the then defunct party of John Northampton.[2]

He was accused in 1388 together with de la Pole, Robert Tresilian and other friends of the King of the following: having prevented access by others to the King, misled the King, caused the King to give manors, lands, and other offices to persons of their party and to persons from whom they received gifts or whom they wished to use (such as Usk), having caused the King to grant them money, etc.[3] As is well known Brembre was condemned and executed.

At his death Brembre left extensive estates (entered in the Inquisitions) in London and Kent.

William de Walworth was born about 1320. He was apprenticed to John Lovekin, Stockfishmonger, Mayor of London, 1348, 1358, 1365, 1366.[4] He was executor of Lovekin's will and seems to have retained a special feeling of loyalty for him, because in 1381 he founded a college of a master and nine chaplains to celebrate divine service for the good estate of the King, himself, and Margaret his wife, for their souls after death and for that of John Lovekin, formerly his master.[5] He was elected Mayor of London in 1374 and again in 1380. In 1370 he and Simon de Morden lent the king £ 300. On the day of Edward III's death he and John Philipot went to the young King, implored his favour for the city of London, and asked him to put a stop to John of Gaunt's persecutions. When the Commons voted a subsidy to the King for carrying on the war, they expressed distrust of the management of it, and demanded

[1] It is noticeable that from 1377 on John of Northampton is never mentioned in the Patent Rolls in connection with financial operations, loans to the King, etc. [2] Rot. Parl. III, 141 ff. 225. [3] Rot. Parl. III, 230. [4] Woodcock, Lives of Lord Mayors, Surrey Arch. Coll. VIII, 277 ff. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 99.

that the funds be intrusted to Walworth and Philipot, treasurers for the war. In 1381 Walworth accompanied the boy King at his meeting with the Peasant leaders, and he, Brembre and Philipot were knighted by the King for their bravery on this occasion. He died in 1381. Walworth was appointed on many commissions of various sorts and dealt extensively in land.

John Warde did not bulk so large in London affairs as did the others and consequently I have been able to learn but little about him. He belonged to the Grocers' Company and consequently without doubt to Brembre's faction.[1] He had been sheriff in 1366 and was elected Mayor of London in 1375.[2]

Robert Girdelere is even more difficult to trace than Warde. He was sheriff of London 1368-9.[3] I have found reference to a transaction in which Robert Girdler agreed to buy certain cables and cords.[4] Consequently he may not have been a dealer in provisions and was perhaps a member of John Northampton's party. The last reference that I have found to him is the date of his collectorship, 1376.

Richard Northbury was a leader of John Northampton's party. He was a member of the Mercer's Company.[5] In 1384 he was found guilty with John of Northampton of sedition, and imprisoned. Certain tenements which he held in London were forfeited to the King.[6] In 1385 the King granted him 10m. a year for clothing and 26m. a year for victuals, while he was a prisoner in Corfe Castle.[7] In 1391 the Commons petitioned the King to annul the decision against him and to restore him his lands, at the same time making similar petitions for John Northampton and John More. All three were granted.[8]

John Philipot is treated in D. N. B. He was apparently a shipowner, and certainly a member of the Grocers' Company. In 1363 he was appointed on a commission to seize forfeited goods for the King. In 1364 he was granted license to buy victuals and take them to Calais. In 1378 he was elected Mayor. In 1379 Sir Roger Beauchamp, lord chamberlain to the King's household, bequeathed him "my great cup gilt, which the King of Navarre gave me," and made him one of the executors of his will. In the same year he

[1] Orridge, Citizens of London. [2] Coll. of London Cit. (Camden Soc.) pp. 88, 89. [3] Coll. of London Cit. (Camden Soc.) p. 88. [4] Cal. of Letters, City of London, p. 144. [5] Cal. Rot. Pat. Turr. Lon., p. 223. [6] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 481. [7] idem, p. 548. [8] Rot. Parl., p. 292.

contributed largely to fitting out a fleet against the French, hiring a number of ships at his own expense and redeeming a thousand sets of armour and arms which had been pawned. In 1383 he was appointed on a commission to treat of peace with the Duke of Flanders. He died in 1384.

John Organ was alderman of London and sheriff in 1385.[1] I have not been able to discover what company he belonged to. In 1378 he was appointed one of the collectors of the tax of two-fifteenths.[2] In 1383 he was appointed one of the collectors of the subsidy of 2s. from each tun of wine and 6d. in the pound from the merchandise in the port of London.[3] From these appointments it seems likely that he was friendly to the Brembre faction—note also that he succeeded Philipot at the latter's death.

[1] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 90. [2] Rymer IV, 34. [3] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 128.

OTHER ASSOCIATES OF CHAUCER

John de Burley

John de Burley, with whom Chaucer in 1376 went on a diplomatic mission, was a brother of Simon de Burley.[1] He was certainly attached personally to the Black Prince, for in 1378 Richard II confirmed to him a grant made by himself when prince (51 Ed. III) confirming a grant of his father the prince of Wales (41 Ed. III) of £40 yearly for de Burley's services, especially at the battle of Nazare where he was the prince's bodyguard.[2] In 1373 he was appointed Captain of Calais and commissioned to supervise the fortifications of Oderwyk and other places besides Calais.[3] In 1375 he was on a commission to treat for peace with France.[4] In 1377 he was a witness of Edward III's will,[5] and stepped out of the position of Captain of Calais.[6] In 1377 he was granted the constableship of Nottingham Castle for life.[7] (He gave it up in 1381).[8] In 1378 Richard II confirmed to him a grant (47,50 Edward III) of 40m. yearly in addition to the £40 already granted.[9] In 1378, £40 yearly were granted at his supplication, to his son W. de Burley, esquire, "retained to stay with the King."[10] In 1377 John de Burley, Knight of the King's Chamber,[11] was given the custody of Sherwood Forest.[12] In 1378 he had the King change his grants of £40 and 40m. to one of 100m. and give the latter to his son, John de Burley, Kt.[13] In 1378 he was on a commission to treat for the marriage of Richard II with a daughter of the Duke of Milan.[14] Later he was engaged in negotiations for Richard's marriage with Anne of Bohemia. While so employed, he and Michael de la Pole and Gerard del Isle were taken prisoners and held for ransom. On this occasion the King sent money for the ransom of the three.[15] On another occasion he was taken prisoner in Germany after having been sent as messenger to the King of Bohemia, and the King contributed 500m. to his ransom.[16] In 1381 he gave up the custody of Sherwood forest, and also that of Nottingham Castle.[17] In that year and the following he and Simon de Burley are mentioned in connection with transfers of land.[18] In 1382 he was a

[1] C. R. 242 mem. 17. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 197. [3] Rymer III, 989, 992. [4] Rymer III, 1021. [5] Test. Vet., p. 11. [6] Rymer IV, 2. [7] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 34. [8] idem, p. 60. [9] idem, p. 108. [10] idem, p. 283. [11] He was also so mentioned in 1370. [12] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 33. [13] idem, p. 281. [14] Rymer old ed. VII, 213. [15] Devon's Issues III, 224-5. [16] Issue Roll (Devon) 7 Rich. II, p. 225. [17] Cal. Pat. Roll, pp. 54, 60. [18] idem, p. 160.

Justice of the Peace in Hereford. In 1385 he was granted for life the custody of the alien priory of Wotton Waweyn, provided that its value should not exceed £45, 13s. 4d. yearly, the rent which he was wont to pay for it.[1] I find no later mention of him, except the rather doubtful one of his inheriting land from Simon de Burley (in 1388).

Sir Edward de Berkeley

Sir Edward de Berkeley was a Knight of the chamber to Richard II.[2] In 1376 he was appointed on a commission to treat for peace with France.[3] In 1378, Richard II confirmed a grant made by himself when Prince (50 Edward III) confirming letters patent of his father (45 Edward III)—of fifty pounds yearly.[4] In 1378 he is mentioned as going on an expedition with John of Gaunt,[5] and is again appointed on a commission to treat for peace with Flanders.[6] He died 4 Richard II, leaving a manor and some lands in Suffolk.[7] His will, which is extant,[8] directs that his body be buried in the church of St. Mary Carmelites in Calais; and bequeathes his "dominion and monastery at Hikeling" to "Sir John Clanbrow" (probably Sir John Clanvowe).

Sir Thomas de Percy

Sir Thomas de Percy, with whom Chaucer was sent to Flanders in 1377, was brother of Henry de Percy, count of Northumberland.[9] He was with the Black Prince at Bergerath, 44 Edward III.[10] In 1378 a grant by Edward III to Thomas de Percy, "whom the King has retained to stay with him," of 100m. yearly was confirmed.[11] In that year and at many times subsequent he was admiral of the north.[12] In 1378 he was appointed with others to treat with the King of Scotland,[13] in 1379 to treat with the Duke of Brittany.[14] From 1381 on many pardons were granted at his request. In 1381 he was appointed custodian of the Castle of Brest. In 1383 he was on a commission to treat with Flanders and France.[15] In 1386 he was sub-chamberlain in the King's household (literally "southchamberlain").[16] By 1392 he was chamberlain of the household.[17] In 1398 he was made Earl of Worcester[18] and appointed with John of Gaunt on a commission for redressing violations of

[1] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 45. [2] Rymer IV, 53. [3] idem III, 1067, 9. [4] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 232. [5] Rymer IV, 45. [6] Rymer IV, 53. [7] Cal. Inq. P. M. III, 28. [8] Test Vet., p. 113. [9] Rymer IV, 51. [10] Dugdale I, 285. [11] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 108. [12] idem, p. 327. [13] Rymer IV, 51. [14] Rymer old. ed. VII, 223. [15] idem, 412. [16] idem, 675. [17] idem, 721. [18] Dugdale I, 285.

the truce. In 1399 he was appointed executor of the Duchess of Gloucester's will. He was beheaded in 1403 because of his connexion with the rising of Hotspur. He was a Knight of the Garter.

Sir William de Beauchamp

That Sir William de Beauchamp was a friend to Chaucer has been recognized for some time. In May 1888 Mr. W. D. Selby called attention to this connection with Chaucer in a short article in The Athenaeum. In this article Mr. Selby gave a few facts about him, gathered professedly from Dugdale, but omitted all mention of the curious connection Sir William de Beauchamp had with the property of the Earl of Pembroke, for his custodianship of which Chaucer was one of the sureties.

William de Beauchamp was a younger son of Thomas, Earl of Warwick.[1] In 40 Edward III he attended John of Gaunt in his expedition into Spain. In 44 Edward III he served as a Knight in France, in the retinue of John of Gaunt, and again in 47 Edward III. In 47 Edward III de Beauchamp signed an indenture to serve John of Gaunt in peace and in war during his life in consideration of one hundred marks yearly and wages for six horses and four boys.[2] He had been connected with John of Gaunt's household even earlier, in 1340 and 1346.[3] In 1 Richard II he served with Edmund de Langley, Earl of Cambridge, in Spain with 200 men-at-arms and 200 archers, and in the King's navy at sea under John of Gaunt. In 13 Richard II he served again in France.

In 1377 he was granted for life the custody of Feckanham forest and park at a farm of £ 37, 14s. 4½d. From the beginning of his reign, Richard II granted many pardons at the supplication of William de Beauchamp. In 1379 he was chamberlain of the King's household; in 1380 he was granted an annuity of 200m.[4] He was regularly on commissions of the peace in Warwick, in company with his brother, the Earl of Warwick. In 1379 he and Lewis de Clifford aided Robert de Ferrers in acquiring the manor of Wemme in fee.[5] In 1383 he was appointed on a commission to treat with Flanders. In 1384 he was appointed Captain of Calais—a position he held until 1392.

To return now to one matter in which Chaucer is closely connected with William de Beauchamp. In 1378 the King granted

[1] Cf. Dugdale's Baronage I, 238 ff, Dugdale Antiquities of Warwickshire II, 1029 ff. [2] Register of John, duke of Lancaster, vol. 13. Misc. Books—Rec. Off. [3] Same book. [4] Not £200 as Mr. Selby says. See Pat. Roll 1380, pp. 561, 600. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 332.

William de Beauchamp the custody of the Castle and estates of Pembroke, in his hands by reason of the minority of the Earl of Pembroke. The father of the last Earl of Pembroke, John de Hastings, had, by license from the crown, settled all his possessions, in the event of failure of his own issue, except the Castle and town of Pembroke, upon his cousin William de Beauchamp (his mother's sister's son).[1] These lands were in the hands of the King in 1378 because John de Hastings had died and his son was still a minor; naturally he appointed the next heir custodian of them. But William de Beauchamp's management of the estates was certainly not satisfactory and, if the suretyship of Chaucer was anything but a form, the poet stood a good chance of losing by it. The first notice we find of Beauchamp's unsatisfactory management is in 1386, when a commission was appointed to enquire touching the waste in the possessions of John de Hastyngs by William de Beauchamp, to whom the King had committed the custody of the land.[2] In the same year we find record of an indenture made between Margaret Mareschall, countess of Norfolk, guardian of John de Hastyngs, and the said John, on the one side, and William de Beauchamp on the other, whereby the latter agreed to surrender his custody of the estates, and the former in return to free him of liability for the "waste."[3] In 1389 the King appointed a commission to enquire touching the waste in the lands of the alien priory of Kirkeby Monachorum, county Warwick, in the time of William de Beauchamp, Knight, farmer thereof.[4]

In 1390 we find a "Revocation for reasons declared before the King and council in the present parliament, with the assent of the nobles, magnates, etc., of recent letters granting during pleasure to William de Beauchamp the custody of the lands, tenements, etc. of John de Hastyngs."[5] In the same year the custody was regranted to John Golafre, Knight of the King's chamber, at a farm of £ 600 (Beauchamp had paid £ 500).[6] In 1390, however, the young Earl of Pembroke was killed in a tournament, and according to the provisions made by his father, the estates devolved upon William de Beauchamp. Other heirs contested his rights to them, but he won. A curious story told about his claim, is as follows: "Beauchamp invited his learned counsel to his house in

[1] Surrey Arch. Coll. XVII, 29, 30. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 257. [3] idem, p. 350. [4] idem, p. 208. Whether these were part of the Pembroke holdings or not, I do not know. [5] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 180. [6] idem, p. 297.

Paternoster Row in the city of London; amongst whom were Robert Charlton (then a judge), William Pinchbek, William Brenchesley, and John Catesby (all learned lawyers); and after dinner, coming out of his chapel in an angry mood, threw to each of them a piece of gold and said: 'Sirs, I desire you forthwith to tell me, whether I have any right and title to Hasting's lordships and lands?' Whereupon Pinchbek stood up (the rest being silent, fearing that he suspected them) and said: 'No man here, nor in England, dare say that you have any right in them, except Hastings [1] quit his claim therein; and should he do it being now under age, it would be of no validity.' '' (Dugdale).

In 1387 [2] when Richard II was preparing for his assault upon the Gloucester faction with which William de Beauchamp was evidently, as his brother the Earl of Warwick was certainly, connected, he tried to remove Beauchamp from the office of Captain of Calais, by messenger. Beauchamp refused to leave the office, ''saying that he received that charge and trust publicly from the King, in the presence of his nobles, and therefore would not quit it in a private manner'' (Dugdale). When his successor arrived, Beauchamp arrested him, and took him to England. There Beauchamp himself was arrested but was soon released. In 1393 he was summoned to Parliament as Baron Bergavenny (a title received in connection with the Pembroke estates). From 1390-96 I find reference to grants of land made by him to religious bodies. He seems to have been rather in disfavour in these closing years of Richard II's reign, but under Henry IV he received new grants, of the manor of Feckenham, rent-free, and of the custody of the Castle and county of Pembroke. He died 12 Henry IV and was buried in Black Friars, Hereford.

He married Joan, second sister and coheir of Thomas Fitz Alen, Earl of Arundel. He was a Knight of the Garter. Dugdale prints (in his Warwickshire) the wills of William de Beauchamp and his wife, remarkable medieval documents.

Richard Forester

The name of Richard Forester is connected with Chaucer's first in 1378, when Chaucer, about to go abroad on a mission for the King, had letters of attorney under the names of John Gower and Richard Forester,[3] and again in 1386, when a lease for the house

[1] Evidently Edward Hastings, a contesting heir. [2] According to Beltz, p. 229. [3] Life Records, No. 120, p. 216.

over Aldgate which Chaucer had occupied during his years as controller of the customs in London was made out by the Mayor and Aldermen to Richard Forester, citizen of London.[1] Various entries with regard to Richard Forester occur in the public records. Whether all of them refer to one man or not, and whether any concerns Chaucer's friend, I cannot say. I shall merely present them in order of their occurrence.

In 37 Edward III Richard Forester was appointed custodian and supervisor of the river bank called "la Ree de Ettemore."[2] In 1369 he is on the list of esquires of less degree.[3] In 1370 ten pounds were paid out of the Exchequer to Richard Forester, of Stanton, who had been sent with six archers to Shropshire to carry a certain sum of money from thence to London.[4] Later in the same year he received ninety-one pounds, two shillings, seven pence half penny for the expenses of himself, his men at arms and archers in the war.[5] In 44 Edward III "our beloved armiger" Richard Forester of Stanton was granted custody of the manor of Stokelaty in Hereford which had belonged to Richard Rissholm, deceased.[6] In 47 Edward III, Richard la Forester de Beckele had a grant of ten pounds and one robe per annum as a "vallettus" of the royal chamber.[7] In 50 Edward III Richard Forester was granted custody of the manor of Waterpyrye and one messuage in Thomele in Oxfordshire, and the manor of Wormenhale in Buckinghamshire, during the minority of the heir.[8]

In 1378 Richard II confirmed to Richard le Forester of Beckele, "whom the King has retained to stay with him," his annuity of ten pounds.[9] In 5 Richard II the King granted to Richard Forester and his son Lambert custody of the royal manor of Bekkele with the hamlet of Horton for ten years at a rent of fifty marks per annum.[10] In 7 Richard II Forester is referred to as an inhabitant of Oxfordshire.[11] In 12 Richard II Richard Forester of Stanton paid two marks for a confirmation of a grant of Edward III of certain lands in Oxfordshire.[12] In 16 Richard II Richard Forester, citizen of London, with a group of London mercers acquired some land.[13] Again in 21 Richard II he acquired more land, but later assigned it to his associates.[14]

[1] Life Records, No. 192, p. 264. [2] Pat. Roll 267, mem. 6. [3] L. R., p. 174. [4] Devon's Issues, p. 170. [5] idem, p. 461. [6] Pat. Roll 281, mem. 36. [7] Pat. Roll 289, mem. 21. [8] idem 293, mem. 8. [9] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 126. [10] Fine Roll 184, mem. 14. [11] idem 187, mem. 25. [12] idem 192, mem. 3. [13] C. R. 234, mem. 20 dorso. [14] C. R. 241, mem. 14 dorso, mem. 12 dorso.

Henry Scogan

With regard to Henry Scogan I have but few facts which do not appear in Professor Kittredge's article.[1] In 9 and 10 Richard II he was a vallettus of Simon de Burley's. Many entries in the Issue Roll of those years indicate that he was employed to carry money from the exchequer to de Burley, and to arrange for the fortification of Dover.[2] In 15 Richard II ten pounds were given to Henry Scoggan, scutifer, at Nottingham.[3] In 20 Richard II Henry Scoggan of Reynham granted to Thomas Wery and others three pieces of land in Tostes, for which they were to pay him a penny yearly.[4] In the same year he and John Hollech, chivaler, went on a bond for Henry Recheford, under penalty of two hundred pounds each, that the latter should do no harm to the Gedneys.[5] In 21 Richard II he conveyed a hundred shillings from the Exchequer into the King's chamber[6]—an action which suggests that he was probably connected with the King's court at this time.

Oto de Graunson

The only important fact which I have found with regard to de Graunson—aside from those mentioned in Romania XIX—is an indenture made apparently in 48 Edward III, between Otz de Granson chivaler, and John of Lancaster.[7] According to this document de Granson agrees to serve the Duke in time of peace as well as of war in return for a fee of a hundred marks a year.

Bukton

Skeat has supposed the Bukton mentioned in Chaucer's Lenvoy a Bukton, to be Sir Peter Bukton of York. There is, however, at least one other possibility. A Robert de Bukton is mentioned in 3 Richard II as armiger to Thomas de Percy,[8] with whom it will be remembered Chaucer had some three years before been associated in a diplomatic mission. In 14, 15, and 16 Richard II, Robert de Bukton, scutifer of Thomas de Percy, is frequently men-

[1] Harvard Studies and Notes I. [2] Issues, P. 313, mem. 12, 13, 19, 21 (2 entries) P. 314, mem. 1, 4, 7, 12, 13. P. 315, mem. 15, 18. P. 316, mem. 1, 2, 16. [3] Issues, P. 325, mem. 8. [4] C. R. 238, mem. 32 dorso. [5] C. R. 238, mem. 12 dorso. [6] Issues, P. 343, mem. 12. [7] Duchy of Lancaster Registers, No. 13 f, 134 dorso. On de Graunson, see note in Earl of Derby's Expeditions (Camden Soc.) p. 309. [8] Issues, P. 301, mem. 21.

tioned in the Issue Roll as transmitting money from the Exchequer to de Percy,[1] and in one case to Louis Clifford.[2] In 15 Richard II, the King inspected and confirmed a patent of Queen Anne dated 15 Richard II, being a grant for the term of her life to her esquire Robert Bucton, of a quantity of pasture and wood called "Gosewold" in her lordship of Eye, "by the yearly service of the rent of a rose."[3] In 1399 this was confirmed,[4] and in 1401 Robert de Bukton is mentioned as constable of the Castle of Eye.[5] Robert de Bukton was returned to Parliament from the county of Suffolk in 17 Richard II (1393-4), 20 Richard II (1396-7), 21 Richard II (1397, 1397-8) and 2 Henry IV, (1400-1). On account of his constant connection with the court, Robert de Bukton would seem more probably to have been Chaucer's Bukton, than Skeat's candidate.[6]

[1] P. 323, mem. 11. P. 324, mem. 1, 12, 21. P. 327, mem. 17, P. 328, mem. 16. P. 330, mem. 1, 22. [2] P. 323, mem. 8. [3] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 324. [4] idem 1399, p. 16. [5] idem 1401, p. 540. [6] On Sir Peter Bukton, see note in Scrope-Grosvenor Roll, II, 466-7, containing many facts not in Skeat.

CHAUCER'S CAREER AND HIS RELATION TO JOHN OF GAUNT

What then is the bearing of all this upon Chaucer's career? Let us take up the matter point by point. In the first place it is clear that although in a few cases the esquires were connected with important families, in none did any come from a major branch of an important family and in most the derivation is from ordinary stock. Chaucer was then associated with a group of men who came from much the same class as himself.[1]

Secondly it appears that the esquires were frequently the sons of men connected in some way with the court.[2] In this respect also Chaucer was like his associates, for his father, in 1338 at least was in the King's service.[3] Further many of the esquires had served in the household of one of the King's children before becoming members of the King's household. In this respect also Chaucer with his service in the Duke of Clarence's house was like a number of his fellows.

The exact nature of Chaucer's position in the household it is difficult to discover. Dr. Furnivall supposed from an entry of May 25, 1368, the second half yearly payment of Chaucer's annuity, that he was first a "vallettus" of the King's chamber.[4] But it is by no means certain that this is correct. Chaucer is called "vallettus" of the King's chamber only once; in all other early references he is described, if at all, as "vallectus hospicii Regis." There is, I believe, a difference between these two. As I have already pointed out,[5] a certain confusion with regard to the use of such phrases undoubtedly exists in the records. As evidence of this confusion we find men called "vallettus" after they have been called "armiger," and sometimes men who are normally called "vallettus camere Regis" named as "vallettus hospicii Regis." Yet if we look up the entries with regard to the men called "valletz de la chambre du Roi" in the list of 1368,[6] we find that in such records as the Patent Rolls where *definitely* characterized,[7] they are generally referred to as "vallettus camere nostre." For

[1] Cf., pp. 6-11 above. [2] p. 12. [3] L. R. No. 13, p. 145 Intro. p. XI. [4] L. R. No. 50, p. 161. [5] p. 17 above. [6] L. R., p. 167. [7] In many cases, of course, they are called merely "vallettus noster," "dilectus vallettus" or "dilectus servitor."

example, William Gambon is so titled seven times and never as "vallettus hospicii nostri." [1] Reginald Neuport is called six times "vallettus camere Regis." [2] John Tipet is called the same at least five times, and never by any other title.[3] Thomas Cheyne is called "vallettus camere Regis" five times.[4] Thomas Loveden alone is called "vallettus hospicii Regis" twice and "vallettus camere" once.[5] Under the circumstances, if Chaucer ever was a "vallettus camerae Regis," we should expect him to have been so called more than once. It seems rather more likely that his proper position was that of "vallettus hospicii Regis" [6] and later of course, "armiger" or "scutifer." This view is of course supported by the fact that in the household lists his name does not appear in 1368 as a "vallet de la chambre du Roi" or in 1369 even near the names of men who had been "valletti" of the King's chamber. Further that Chaucer's position by 1368 was distinctly honourable appears from the fact that his name appears as Esquier among a group of men who were not engaged in menial occupations of any kind—as distinguished from the cooks and farriers of the groups called "esquiers survenantz" and "sergeantz des offices parvantz furrures a chaperon."

With regard to Chaucer's employment as an envoy abroad, it is clear that he was, when so engaged, performing a customary service, that indeed he was one of several who were constantly used in minor missions abroad and that his rank and duties were similar to those of a King's messenger today.[7] Likewise the rewards which Chaucer received were not extraordinary. Practically every esquire of Chaucer's rank who remained for any considerable time in the court received an annuity; evidently such pensions were part of the perquisites of the office. A few esquires received a smaller annuity than Chaucer's, many received about the same amount, and many received more.[8] Similarly the special offices which Chaucer held, particularly his controllerships, were not evidences

[1] Pat. Roll 285, mem. 2, idem 274, mem. 37, 257, mem. 25. Cal. Pat. Roll 1377, p. 79. Issues, P. 228, mem. 17. C. R. 207, mem. 12. Pat. Roll 295, mem. 26. [2] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 139. Issues, P. 237, mem. 17. P. 249, mem. 3. P. 251, mem. ? Pat. Roll 288, mem. 21, etc. [3] Issues A 169, mem. 35. P. 228, mem. 17. P. 228, mem. 38. P. 235, mem. 20, etc. [4] Pat. Roll 262, mem. 23, 254, mem. 4, 255, mem. 25, Cal. Rot. Pat. Turr. Lon. p. 174. Abb. Rot. Orig. II, 222. [5] Issues, P. 237, mem. 8. P. 250, mem. 1. Pat. Roll 266, mem. 5. [6] The household books, published in the Chaucer Records, recognize no such classification as "vallettus hospicii Regis," yet the records certainly point to the existence of such a classification. [7] Cf. pp. 19, 20 above. [8] Cf. p. 21 ff.

of remarkable favour: other esquires received the same kind of offices and indeed they were apparently regular sinecures for the members of the King's household.[1] So also the grant of wardships and forfeited goods can be paralleled in many cases. In two respects Chaucer received rather less than the other esquires—he was given no corrody and no grant of land.

In one more respect can Chaucer's career be paralleled by that of other "esquires"—in that of his marriage. Marriages between the esquires of the King and the damsels of the queen were decidedly frequent.[2]

Indeed, it is clear from the study of the careers of the other esquires that, so far as we know, Chaucer received no exceptional favours, and that his career was in practically every respect a typical esquire's career.

In all this then there is no evidence that Chaucer enjoyed the favour of any particular patron. Aside from the fact that, like Chaucer, some of the esquires had served in the household of one of the King's children before entering the King's, I have been able in no case to find evidence of connection between them and any patron. Since Chaucer received no more favours than did the average esquire, there is no particular reason to suppose that he had any patron.

Now let us examine the evidence in favour of his close connection with John of Gaunt. We have two pieces of definite evidence of a connection between Chaucer and John of Gaunt; Chaucer's writing (probably shortly after 1369) of the Book of the Duchess, and John of Gaunt's grant of an annuity of ten pounds in June 1374. The former does not prove anything with regard to a definite relation; such complimentary poems were commonly written for nobles who were not special patrons of the poets; and Chaucer in his Parlement of Foules possibly complimented Richard II in much the same way. In regard to the latter piece of evidence—John of Gaunt's grant of an annuity—two things are to be noted, first that John of Gaunt had previously given an annuity to Philippa Chaucer (in 1372) and, second, that in the grant he gives the cause of making it to Chaucer as services rendered by Chaucer to the Duke and by Chaucer's wife to Queen Philippa and the

[1] Cf. p. 22 ff. [2] Cf. p. 25 ff.

Duke's Consort. In the grant to Philippa on the other hand no mention is made of Geoffrey. This greater particularity in the statement of Philippa's services in Geoffrey's grant, the fact that Philippa was in the duke's household (evidenced by the Christmas gifts of silver cups to her) and the fact that nothing else connects Chaucer definitely with John of Gaunt, make it seem almost certain that the grant of an annuity to Chaucer was made merely in order to increase the sum given to Philippa. Grants of this time which mention the services of both husband and wife are usually made out to both, and undoubtedly in this case the real purpose was to give it to Philippa and her husband.

On the other hand, if John of Gaunt really was "Chaucer's great patron," why did he not give the poet employment in his own household? Anyone who will run thru the Lancashire Registers of this time will be struck with the immensity of the duke's income and the regal scale of his household.[1] Surely had he wished to patronize the poet, he could have done so most easily and most surely by giving him some honorable post in his own control. Why should he have taken the difficult method of procuring him precarious offices under the King?

Since the assertions with regard to John of Gaunt's ascendancy over Chaucer's career have been so common, however, we ought to take up the matter point by point. We have no reason to connect John of Gaunt with Chaucer's start in the world—his employment in the household of the Countess of Clarence. We know that Chaucer's father had relations with the court and, although merely a merchant, he may very likely have secured Chaucer's appointment to the place in the Countess's household, as the fathers of Simon de Burley (not a merchant, but a man of no rank), Michael de la Pole, (a merchant), John Legge, Thomas Frowyk and Thomas Hauteyn obtained appointments for their children in the households of the Prince of Wales and of the King. This was an age when the merchant class was obtaining unusual power and privileges. Richard II, it will be remembered, was called the "Londoner's King." It has been shown that John of Gaunt visited

[1] Cf. Abstracts and Indexes I f. 137 dorso. Warrant to deliver to a damsel for the queen (i. e. John of Gaunt's Spanish wife) 1708 pearls of the largest, 2000 of the second sort. Warrant to bring him at the Savoy all the Rolls of Accounts of all his Recevors General and of his Treasurers of War and of the Household and other officers of the Household, there to be deposited and safely kept. Next page—long list of jewels.

the Countess of Clarence at Christmas 1357, and it has been suggested that he may have met Chaucer then and taken a liking to him. Of actual meeting, however, we have no proof. Chaucer was in the service of the Duke of Clarence in October 1360.[1]; the Duchess of Clarence died in 1363; and we learn of him next in the King's household in 1367. The transition from the household of the wife of one of the King's sons to that of the King himself is one which can be paralleled in many cases; we have no need to suppose patronage on the part of the Duke of Lancaster to account for it. As a matter of fact we have no reason to suppose that John of Gaunt knew anything of Chaucer at this time.

The diplomatic missions, and the grants of annuities and offices were not, as I have shown, evidences of special favour; they were a regular thing in the King's court. We have no reason to suppose that John of Gaunt's influence in favour of Chaucer was a cause for any of them. Further John of Gaunt's influence would have been worthless in helping Chaucer to become Justice of the Peace in Kent in 1385. This appointment must have been made by the Chancellor—Michael de la Pole—possibly at the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant of the County or the Custos Rotulorum. Whether there was a Lord Lieutenant of Kent or not, I do not know. At any rate the constable of Dover Castle and Warden of the Cinque Ports (at this time Simon de Burley) held powers in Kent similar to those of a lord lieutenant, and he occupies the position of the lord lieutenant in the list of Justices of the Peace—at the top. Both de la Pole and de Burley were enemies of John of Gaunt. Even if the appointment was not due to them, we cannot ascribe it to John of Gaunt, for I have been able to find no evidence that John of Gaunt had influence in Kent, or that he controlled any of the other Justices.

Furthermore that Chaucer did not owe his place in the customs to the influence of John of Gaunt is clear from the fact that the collectorships of customs in London, at any rate, were controlled by the duke's enemies. If they had sufficient power with the king to gain control of those offices, it hardly seems likely that the King would appoint a member of the faction opposed to them to serve with them. It is to be noted also that Chaucer on account of the

[1] See Modern Lang. Notes March 1912 article of Dr. Samuel Moore on The New Chaucer Item.

business connections of his family—his father was a vintner and another relative evidently a pepperer—would be more likely to sympathize with the party of Brembre than with that of Northampton.

Now we come to a point where nearly all writers on Chaucer make inferences in regard to John of Gaunt's influence—Chaucer's separation from the office of controller of the customs. Most writers have said more or less directly that Chaucer lost the office because John of Gaunt had left England earlier in the same year. The facts themselves show indubitably that Chaucer's leaving office was in no respect due to John of Gaunt's departure. Before discussing this matter, I must say a word about the political situation before 1386 and in that year. At the very end of Edward III's reign John of Gaunt, who had been the real power since the death of the Black Prince, became extremely unpopular because of his bad administration of the government and his quarrels with the Londoners. This unpopularity continued both in the court and without. Under the new King the great duke had little influence; he was not even included in the great council appointed to control the government during the King's minority. Further a group of young men, connected with the King, gradually assumed charge of affairs—Michael de la Pole, Robert de Vere and others. These men were outright enemies of John of Gaunt; according to the stories of the time they even made plots to poison and to stab him. He himself retired from active political life and, apparently, largely because he saw no chance for gaining great power in England, turned his attention to his Spanish projects;[1] and in 1386 he left England for Spain. Others of the great lords, however, were not content to play a passive role; the brother of John of Gaunt, Gloucester, as leader, and the Earl of Arundel and Warwick, most prominent followers, were particularly violent in their attacks on the King and his friends. To revert now to Chaucer's case: these are the significant facts in their order:

End of March, 1386[2]	John of Gaunt leaves England.
October 24, 1386	Gloucester, Arundel et al. succeed in ousting Michael de la Pole and the King's other cabinet officers.

[1] Trevelyan's view. [2] Or July 7 according to Oman.

December, 1386	Adam Yardley and Henry Gisors are appointed to Chaucer's places in the customs.

These dates speak for themselves; they show indubitably that Chaucer was not removed from office shortly after John of Gaunt's departure; that he was not removed from office (if at all) until the friends of John of Gaunt, the men who represented his interests,[1] had in some measure at least gained the government of the Kingdom.

A similar condition of affairs appears when Chaucer was appointed to his next office in 1389.

May, 1389	The King regained power—dismissed Gloucester's friends from office and appointed his own.
July 12, 1389	He made Chaucer clerk of his works at Westminster.
August, 1389	He seems to have asked John of Gaunt to return to England.
November, 1389	John of Gaunt actually returned.

Richard II then appointed Chaucer to that place a little over a month after he had regained his authority, and four months before John of Gaunt appeared in England.

Finally we cannot connect John of Gaunt in any way with Chaucer's departure from the office of Clerk of the Works in June, 1391. From John of Gaunt's return to England in 1389 until 1395 he seems to have been influential with the King. In 1390 he was made Duke of Aquitaine for life. In 1392 he was ambassador to France, in 1393 he aided in putting down a revolt in Chester. He was in England, apparently, most of this time.

Certainly the analysis of Chaucer's life does not confirm the theory that John of Gaunt exercised a ruling influence over his destiny. Nor does a study of the connections of his associates indicate his dependency on John of Gaunt. His friend William de Beauchamp was at a later date certainly a member of the Gloucester-Warwick faction. But in 1378 and 1380, when Chaucer was apparently connected with him, Beauchamp was a member of the King's household (from 1379 on chamberlain of the household), evidently in favour with the King and not a partisan of the Lan-

[1] In the following year his son and heir, the Earl of Derby, was one of the "lord appellants."

caster-Gloucester faction. Further we know that Chaucer associated in a business way at least with Brembre, Philipot and Walworth, that he probably knew Thomas Usk, that the latter admired him, and that in the King's household he was connected with some men like John de Beauchamp and John de Salesbury who were not friends to John of Gaunt. Yet toward the end of Richard II's reign we find Chaucer connected in some way with John of Gaunt's son, and when a few years later that son ascended the throne as Henry IV, Chaucer received new annuities and aids. The fact then that Chaucer was friendly with prominent men in both factions makes it incredible that his fortunes were dependent on those of John of Gaunt.

One other suggestion—was John of Gaunt likely to have had enough interest in poetry to patronize a poet? I have found no evidence that he did patronize other poets or artists of any kind, and the impression of his character which a careful scholar like Mr. Trevelyan has gained from a study of his career, is not that he was such a man as would be interested in the arts.

From all these facts, I do not see how it can be maintained that John of Gaunt was Chaucer's "great patron." The evidence, so far as I can make out at present, leads one to the conclusion that Chaucer must have received his offices and royal annuities from the King rather than from John of Gaunt, at times when John of Gaunt's influence would have been harmful rather than beneficial, or when John of Gaunt was not in England to exercise it.

Chaucer's Relation to Richard II

Certain recent investigations have suggested that Richard II and his consort Anne may have been patrons of Chaucer. For this theory the most definite evidence is derived from references to Queen Anne in several of the poems. The most obvious of these references is that in Prologue to L. G. W., version F. ll. 496, 7; another is the one implied in Koch's explanation for the writing of P. F.; and Professor Lowes finds two more in his interpretations of a line in K. T.[1] and of one in the Troilus.[2] Since this investigation has to do wholly with external evidences as to Chaucer's life, it is not my business to deal with these references. I would merely point out that they can derive no active support from the facts

[1] M. L. N. XIX, 240-242. [2] P. M. L. A. 32; 285 ff.

which we know about Chaucer's life, for there is no exceptional feature of his career as an esquire which points toward patronage by anyone. We have no right from the circumstances of his rewards and appointments to suppose that Richard even knew that he was a poet, certainly none to suppose that Richard enjoyed his poetry and patronized him because of it.

To be sure we have certain evidences of Richard II's interest in literature, especially the well known stories of his suggestion to Gower that the poet write the Confessio Amantis, his gift to Froissart for the latter's book of poems, and the payment entered in 1380 on the Issue Roll of twenty-eight pounds for the Bible written in French,[1] the Romance of the Rose and the Romances of Percevale and Gawayn. But those are all; a careful reading of the Issue Roll for all the years of Richard's reign has failed to turn up another entry which would indicate an interest in literature. It is to be noted further that in the entire body of poems left to us by Chaucer but a few unmistakable references to the queen occur, and none to the King. If Chaucer is compared in this respect with his successors Hoccleve and Lydgate a marked difference appears. In a single volume of Hoccleve before me[2] occur three "balades" to Henry V, one to the Duke of York, one to the Duke of Bedford, and one to the Lord Chancellor. Perhaps the striking contrast between this and Chaucer's practice is due to different notions as to the function of poetry, perhaps to some other cause, but it exists, and it causes one to feel that, in comparison with Hoccleve at least, the internal evidences of patronage in Chaucer's poems are slight indeed. Finally the fact that Chaucer was treated favourably by the government of Henry IV would suggest that his personal relations with Richard II had not been very close.

Some General Points

Although I have objected to some of the inferences drawn by others, nevertheless it seems to me that from the facts viewed in their new relations, some legitimate inferences may be drawn. In the first place it seems almost certain that by 1386 Chaucer held considerable land in Kent. Every other man on the list of Justices

[1] Devon's translation, p. 213, is incorrect; the phrase in the document is "lingua gallica." Issues P. 301, mem. 16. [2] Hoccleve's works I, E. E. T. S. 1892.

of the Peace (with the single possible exception of Topclyff) held fairly extensive lands in the county; all except de Burley, Topclyff and Chaucer were of old Kentish families. De Burley's importance as Constable of Dover (indeed he undoubtedly held the office of Justice *ex officio*) and Topclyff's position as steward of the Archbishop of Canterbury counterbalanced the fact that they were not of Kentish stock. What then of Chaucer? He surely must have held a manor and lands of considerable value or he could never have been high enough in the estimation of the landed proprietors to gain the Justiceship and even the membership to Parliament. Now, he apparently did not receive this land by royal grant; consequently it would appear that he must have had it by grant of some great noble or by purchase. In any case we have no record to indicate what land he held or by what tenure he held it.

Again we do not know what Chaucer's income as controller of the customs amounted to. It is apparent, however, that the returns from the office of controller of the greater custom must have been very considerable. If the collectorship of the customs was not a profitable office, it is impossible to see why such men as Walworth, Philipot, and Brembre should have cared to hold it. That the twenty pounds which was their nominal salary was anything like all that they received is unbelievable. To suppose that a man who could fit out a fleet at his own expense and successfully campaign with it against a powerful pirate, should allow himself to be annoyed by so paltry an office is absurd. Yet the office was apparently not farmed, and so it seems likely that the income from fees was large and attractive.[1] To how great an extent Chaucer, aside from the ten pounds yearly that he received, shared in the profits, we do not know. From the fact that the King in giving the collectors and the controller extra rewards seems to have rated the latter at about a third of the importance of the former, we might get some hint of the proportion in which he would share in the fees.

Chaucerian scholars have laid great stress upon the grant of permission to Chaucer in 1385 to appoint a permanent deputy in his office in the greater customs. They have even assumed that the L. G. W. was dedicated to the queen out of gratitude for her supposed intercession with the king, and the consequent permission, and have used these suppositions as evidence for dating

[1] The View of W. D. Chester: Chronicles of the Custom's Dept., p. 30.

L. G. W. Surely too much has been made of this matter. Not only have we no evidence whatever to connect Queen Anne with the granting of the deputyship; we do not have to assume any intercession with the king.[1] We know that esquires who were granted offices in the customs frequently did have deputies in their offices;[2] probably leave to have a deputy could be had almost for the asking.

Moreover, the office of controller, if we can judge from the records of Chaucer's time (cf. Mr. Kirk's print in the Chaucer Society—not yet issued) could not have been a very burdensome one. Yet even the provision that Chaucer write the records with his own hand was not—in the opinion of the officials of the Record Office—held to even as early as 1381. The reason for this judgment is that the preserved records are written in a decidedly good Chancery hand, a style of writing which only a professional Chancery clerk is supposed to have been master of.[3] Consequently either Chaucer must have been a regular Chancery clerk, or he employed a clerk to write up the records. If he did the latter—as seems most likely—it is hard to see what work of importance can have been left to himself. Why then should he care for a permanent deputy? If we look at the circumstances of his life in 1385, we may discover a possible reason. In that year, he first appears prominently in connection with Kent. The sequence of events is:

February, 1385—deputy appointed.
October, 1385—Justice of the Peace in Kent.
June, 1386—Justice of the Peace in Kent.
August, 1386—Member of Parliament for Kent.

He must have been out of London at latest some time early in 1385, and he may have been occupied with the purchase and management of whatever land he possessed in Kent, and with the politics of that county. Consequently, he may have desired to have a recognized deputy in the office who would relieve him of all official responsibility. One can see no reason why he should have felt particularly grateful for the grant of this merely technical freedom.

Furthermore we can have no knowledge, with our present information alone, of why Chaucer ceased to be controller at the end of 1386. I have already shown that this could not have been due

[1] See forthcoming article: Chaucer and the Earl of Oxford, in Modern Philology.
[2] Cf. cases of John de Herlyng, Helming Leget, John Hermesthorpe et al.
[3] See Tales of the Canterbury Pilgrims, Stokes & Co., Intro., by Furnivall, p. X note.

to John of Gaunt's absence from England. It is almost equally certain that it was not due to the fact that Chaucer was a partisan of the King or that the council of thirteen was instructed to inquire into the conduct of the King's offices and to initiate reforms.[1] The proof of those statements is this: so far as we know Chaucer's only fault in the conduct of these offices was the fact that he "performed" them by deputy; now, although the two offices were granted in December to Adam Yardley [2] and Henry Gisorz,[3] the controllership of the greater custom was re-granted scarcely six months later to John Hermesthorpe [4] (July 2, 1387) and with that very grant he was empowered to exercise the office by deputy.

Furthermore Henry Gisorz, who succeeded Chaucer in the controllership of the petty customs, was appointed by Chaucer as his deputy, in 7 Richard II [5] in that office. This office was re-granted September 2, 1388 to Robert Kesteven.[6] Now in the case of the controllership of the greater customs, it seems evident that Adam Yardeley was merely put into the office as a stop-gap. Note that he was not considered of sufficient importance to be given another grant in 1387 to compensate him for the loss of the office. And similarly in that of the lesser customs, it seems clear that Gisors, Chaucer's deputy in the office, was appointed temporarily to the office, on the departure of Chaucer, and deprived of it again as soon as the King found some one to whom he wished to give a sinecure.

[1] As Colton in his book on Chaucer's England assumes, pp. 58-59.

[2] Adam Yardeley, clericus, was in 1383 joined with a serjeant at arms to take and arrest mariners for the passage of the Bishop of Norwich across the channel. This would suggest that he was connected in some way with the court, since such duties were commonly assigned to esquires and clerks of the court.

[3] Henry Gisors seems to have come from an eminent London family. (Riley Memorials pp. 74, 185. Ancient Deeds, A 7833. Maitland History of London, p. 825). In 11 Richard II and 16 Richard II he was concerned with John Hermesthorpe in certain transfers of land in London. (Ancient Deeds, B 2118, 2121).

[4] John Hermesthorpe was a very much more important person. He was for some years one of the chamberlains of the King's exchequer, probably as early as 1370 when on one day he conveyed payments of their annuities to Philippa Chaucer and three other damsels of the queen. He was likewise a priest, for a time confessor to the King, and holder of various ecclesiastical preferments, in London and elsewhere. He was in particular Master of the Hospital of St. Katherine from 1368 till a few years before his death in 1412. The fact that he was in favour with the King and that he was allowed to exercise the office by deputy, makes untenable the supposition that Chaucer was dismissed because he was a friend to the King, or because he did not actually conduct the office himself. (Devon's Issues, p. 359, Cal. Pat. Roll 1379, p. 386. Full statement of ecclesiastical offices in Bibliotheca Topographica Brittanica II, 82.)

[5] C. R. 224, mem. 36. [6] Cal. Pat. Roll, p. 502.

Surely, if one may be allowed to draw inferences from facts, it seems most likely that Chaucer resigned the offices either to take up some work not now known to us, or to have leisure after more than ten years' occupation in office and missions, and that on his resignation the King made merely temporary appointments and later filled the offices according to his pleasure.

The theory that Chaucer's surrender of his annuity indicates any extraordinary condition or disfavour on the part of his patrons is likewise not supported by the facts. In the introduction to the Chaucer Records, Mr. Kirk writes: "It may be asserted without fear of contradiction, that it was a most unusual thing for any man to surrender a pension, and for the King to grant it to someone else. Lands and tenements, or offices, were frequently surrendered in this way, but not pensions."[1] Surely Mr. Kirk's statement is too strong, for it is easy to find plenty of examples of transfers of annuity quite analogous to Chaucer's. For example, in 38 Edward III a grant of ten marks yearly to John Gateneys was, with his consent, taken from him and given to Thomas de Fysshebone.[2] Later an annuity held by John de Stone, a valet, was transferred by his request to Peter de Bruge.[3] Other examples are a transfer of an annuity from Hugh Ferrour to John Spencer at the request of the former;[4] from T. de Laleham to John Stapenhull—at request of the former[5]—from Richard des Armes to John Andrews—"at supplication" of Richard[6]—from John Roose to Roger Lestrange—granted by the former,[7]—from Peter de Sancto Paulo to John de Herlyng—made by the former and confirmed by the King.[8] Doubtless many other examples could be found since I have not attempted to do more than note the cases that fell under my eye. Apparently the sale of annuities was quite as ordinary and recognized a practice as that of offices or lands.[9]

[1] p. XXXVI. [2] Pat. Roll 269, mem. 12. [3] idem 273, mem. 10. [4] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 248. [5] idem, p. 150. [6] Cal. Pat. Roll 1378, p. 146, 1389, p. 95. [7] Pat. Roll 1378, pp. 112-113. [8] Cal. Pat. Roll 1350, p. 574. [9] John Scalby, to whom Chaucer's annuity was granted, seems to have been an esquire in the King's household. The first record of him is a grant for life to John de Scalby of the forestership and custody of the forest of Parkhurst and Odepark, Isle of Wight (1382). In 1386 John de Scalby the elder was on a commission in East Riding (Yorkshire). In 12 Richard II John Scalby, esquire of the bishop of Sarum, borrowed twenty shillings from the Exchequer. In 17 Richard II he and his wife Mathilda borrowed £ 26, 13s. 4d. i. e. the forty marks of his annuity, from the Exchequer. In 1396 the King granted to his esquires Richard Cardemewe and John de Scalby the goods and chattels of a certain outlaw, to the value

That Chaucer was out of favour from 1391 on, and in financial trouble is again difficult to establish. Mr. Kirk has shown that his "borrowings" at the Exchequer, in those years, were for the most part no borrowings at all but simply a device for getting money that was due him.[1] Furthermore, many examples of the drawing of money "de prestito" from the Exchequer may be found in the Issue Roll. In 11 Richard II Philippa Duchess of Ireland drew £ 133, 6s. 8d. in this way.[2] In the same year Edmond Rose borrowed money from the Exchequer.[3] As shown above, John Scalby twice drew money in advance in this way. John Herlyng, who in Chaucer's time, was usher of the Chamber, borrowed seven pounds four pence in 28 Edward III, repaying it later;[4] and in 29 Edward III drew forty pounds in the same way.[5] So hosts of examples could be collected from the Issue Roll, of such "borrowings." Certainly they do not indicate that the "borrowers" were financially insolvent.

Moreover none of the other facts which we have, warrants us in assuming that Chaucer was pressed for money and out of favour. In January 1393 he was granted ten pounds for good service rendered in this year now present, i. e. apparently the later part of 1392—the year following his "dismissal." In addition he was in 1394 granted another annuity of twenty pounds. In view of these facts it would seem that the only definite evidence of Chaucer's poverty was the action for debt of £ 14. 1s. 11d. in 1398, but the circumstances connected with it—the King's letters of protection and the sheriff's inability to find Chaucer—are so remarkable that we cannot draw certain inferences from it.[6]

Looking at all the facts, then, we must admit that they do not form any proper basis for most of the assertions that have been made. They do not constitute even the suggestion of proof that, when Chaucer lost his controllerships and gave up his annuity, he was out of favour with the King, that he was soon in dire financial

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of thirty-seven pounds. In 22 Richard II John Scalby, scutifer, was sent from Lichfield to Conway on secret business of the King, and was paid sixteen shillings eight pence for his expenses. In 1399 Henry IV confirmed the grant of forty marks a year to John Scalby. (Cal. Pat. Roll, 1382, p. 150. idem p. 261. Issues, P. 319, mem. 18. idem, P. 332, mem. 23. Cal. Pat. Roll, 1396, p. 48. Issues, P. 344, mem. 11. Cal. Pat. Roll 1399, p. 62).

[1] L. R. pp. XLV, XLVI. [2] Issues, P. 316, mem. 18. [3] idem. [4] idem, P. 294, mem. 18. [5] Issues, P. 212, mem. 1. On Herlyng's financial position see p. 27 above. [6] See Kirk L. R., p. XLVII f.

straits, and that when again in 1391 he lost the clerkship of the works, he was out of favour and pressed for money.

If we wish to guess at the reasons why Chaucer gave up his offices and his pension, we can find plenty of sufficient motives. He may have left the offices for several reasons; he had held the controllership of the customs of wool for twelve years, a long time for the holding of such an office in those days; he may therefore have left because he was tired of them. He may have left them because some one had given him something better—we know, for example, that in the year after he left the clerkship of the works he was employed in some way by the King; so in the earlier case he may have received some other office or employment the record of which has not come down to us. From November 1386 until November 1387 we know that Richard II was scouring the Midlands trying to gather a force with which to oppose Gloucester; he may have employed Chaucer as a secret messenger throughout that year. As to the annuity, Chaucer may have surrendered it because he could get a good price for it and wanted a large sum of money for some purpose, perhaps to buy land or improve it. Or his surrender of the annuity may have been made by arrangement with the King, who may have wished to give an annuity to a comparatively new esquire, and who may have recompensed Chaucer in some other way.

Every fact that we have would fit into the theory that Chaucer led a prosperous and important life (in a business and financial way) from 1374 to the end of his life. Certainly he must have received a large amount of money in that time; we have no evidence of his having lost any; we know of nothing in his character which would lead us to suppose him a spendthrift or inefficient in financial affairs.

I do not wish to maintain that he *was* always prosperous, but only that the facts do not warrant us in assuming that he was constantly on the verge of ruin in the years when, so far as we know, he held no office.

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In connection with the Piers Plowman controversy, I have been struck with Mr. Jusserand's insistence that Chaucer did not touch upon social or political matters in his poems. That was, as Mr. Manly has indicated, very probably due to a theory of the proper subject matter of poetry—an idea current in his time and

enunciated by Alan Chartier most distinctly. But back of that may have been in Chaucer's case certain peculiar traits of character. Chaucer was in direct connection with the court and with the city at the time when political enmity between two main factions was very bitter—so bitter that in 1386 it led to the killing of Simon de Burley and Sir Nicholas Brembre as well as less-known men like Beauchamp and Salesbury and Berners, and to the flight of men like Michael de la Pole and Robert de Vere, and again in 1392 led to the execution of the Earl of Arundel, the murder of Gloucester, and almost to the murder of the Earl of Warwick. Chaucer was in daily contact with men connected with one faction or the other. What was his attitude? What party did he follow? I have tried to suppose that he was a member of the Gloucester or Lancaster faction but I have found facts such as his retention by Richard as controller of the customs from 1383-4 on, and his subsequent appointment to the clerkship of the works, that could scarcely have been brought about by Lancastrian influence. Then I have tried to use as a hypothesis the conception that he was a partisan of the King. But I have not been able to reconcile with that idea the fact that he had the grant of the annuity from John of Gaunt, that Henry IV in the year of his accession granted him an extra annuity of 40 marks in addition to the £ 20 which he confirmed to him, and that in 1395 or 1396 he seems to have been in the employment of either John of Gaunt or Henry, his son. Consequently it seems to me that Chaucer can not have been active in politics. At the very time when factional strife was waging about him he must have kept practically free from both parties. He seems to have had friends in both camps, though by far the greater number were in that of the King: Oto de Graunson—a member of John of Gaunt's household—and in later years apparently Henry of Derby, represent the Lancastrian side; on the other hand, Louis Clifford, John Clanvowe, John Burley—men apparently attached to the Black Prince, his wife and his son,—Brembre and Philipot with whom he must have been on fairly good terms, and probably even Thomas Usk, were men strongly opposed to John of Gaunt. Too many things connect Chaucer with both parties to make his identification with either possible.

The reasons why Chaucer did not dabble pronouncedly in politics may have been various—a clear perception that such was the only safe course for him—an entire indifference and lack of understanding of politics—or what you will. At any rate his connection with both parties is certainly in consonance with the exclusion from his poetry of political matter of the kind which appears for example in Gower.

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